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The World's Childhood

by Louis Albert Banks

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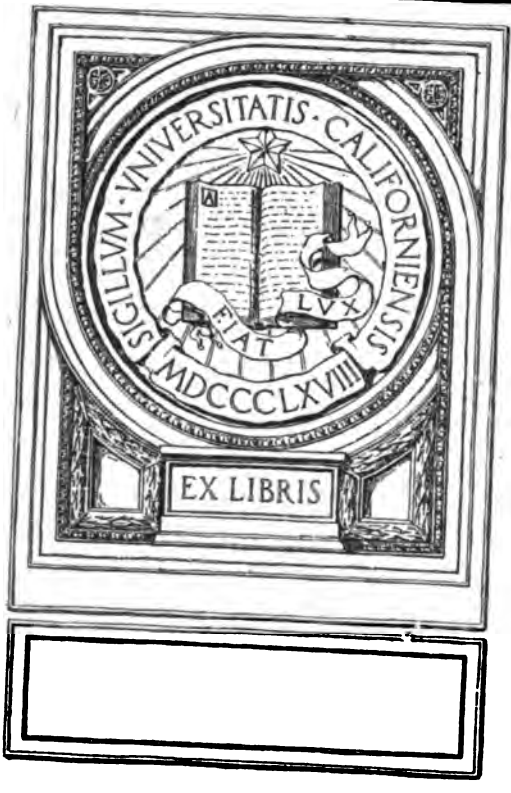

THE WORLD'S CHILDHOOD

THE WORLD'S CHILDHOOD

A SERIES OF SUNDAY EVENING SERMONS FROM THEMES DRAWN FROM THE FIRST THREE CHAPTERS OF GENESIS

By

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To

THE MEMBERS

OF

INDEPENDENCE AVENUE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

THIS VOLUME

IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR

303975

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THE WORLD'S CHILDHOOD

THE BACKGROUND OF HUMAN LIFE

"In the beginning God."—Gen. 1:1.

A DISTINGUISHED Scotchman once wrote with his finger, in the corner of his garden, in the soft mold, the letters of his son's name. He sowed garden-cress in the furrows, covered up the seed, and smoothed the ground. Ten days after this the boy came running to his father, and with astonishment in his countenance shouted to him that his name was growing in the garden. The father laughed at the report, and seemed to disregard it, but the boy insisted on his going to see what had happened.

"Yes," said the father, with assumed indifference, "I see it is so; but what is there in this worth notice? Is it not mere chance?"

"It can not be so," said the boy. "Somebody must have contrived matters so as to produce it."

"Look at yourself," replied the father, "and consider your hands and fingers, your legs and your feet. Came you hither by chance?"

"No," he answered. "Something must have made me."

"And who is that something?" asked the father.

He said, "I don't know."

Then the father drew away the veil from this great background of human life and told him that "In the beginning God created."

I

This sentence which we have chosen for our text is one of the most stupendous utterances ever recorded in human language. The first time any man gives thoughtful utterance to it the mind staggers and reels under the weight of its tremendous meaning. As we steady ourselves for thought and contemplation, it is as tho we stood up against a great chain of lofty mountains—mountains so high and splendid that they form the background of wide-reaching valleys and far-stretching plains which draw all their fertility and beauty from the mountains at our back.

These mountains form the background to the valley. The valley owes its life to the mountains. The mountain summits lift their heads so high that they tap the clouds passing by on the wings of the wind with moisture gathered in far-off seas and compel them to disgorge their precious treasures that they may in turn enrich the valleys and the plains. These captured treasures issue forth in springs, and in brooks, and rivers, moving forth from the deep cañons of the rock-bound hills, and they give life and fertility and support to flocks and herds, and to villages and cities in the plains beyond. So you may follow up the valleys of human life across the plains of history and civilization until you have followed mankind back as far as you can, and you will come straight up against this great mountain range and look into the mystery of the Great White Throne, and hear this splendid but awful utterance, "In the beginning God."

II

The Bible does not argue concerning the existence of God, but in its first utterance it presents the fact of God as the key to the uni-

verse and as the key to human history. Joseph Parker once said: "I have a great and cunningly contrived lock called the universe, and the question is how to open it. I can not tell. It is a grand lock, and I should like to open it. The Bible says, 'I can give you the key of that lock.' Then I say, 'You are a bold book, and boldness is an attribute of truth.' Do I stop there and say I believe there is a key because I have read a book which says there is one? No. I say to the book, whatever its name may be, 'Where is the key?' When the Bible says, 'The key is God, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, righteous, merciful, holy, just, brighter than the light, more patient than motherhood, more pitiful than fatherhood, full of compassion, and most long suffering,' I take the key, I press it into the lock, wholly and easily—what do I do? I kiss the Book, I love it, I call it God's Book, I meditate therein day and night. Have you a better reason? Let me have it: I will try it exactly in the same way—only it must cover all the ground, it must be available night and day, it must not be subject to climatic changes, it must not succumb to atmospheric effects, it must

keep time on the Alps, and keep time in the valleys."

III

Now the greatest conception and the most important which the mind of man can entertain is the kind of God which the Bible brings as a key to open the lock of the universe in which we live. All our religious life, all our religious experience, indeed, all our civilization must be dictated by our conception of God. Men have often made gods of their own imaginings. Robert Browning, in his unique poem, "Caliban upon Setebos," turns preacher and gives a remarkable sermon, and fearing lest some careless reader might not be sure of his meaning, he printed the words of the psalmist as a text above it, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." The poet-preacher takes Caliban, Shakespeare's grotesque monster, and pictures him rolling and wallowing in the slime of a cave on an island, thinking and talking to himself about God. In the heat of the noon, Caliban wallows in the mud, while Prospero and Miranda sleep. He, not drudging at their task, as he glee-

fully thinks, talks to himself about "that other," of whom his dam Sycorax had told him, the god Setebos—a god of the Patagonians. Caliban thinks Setebos dwells in the cold of the moon; hates the cold of the moon, but can not live away from it; and out of very weariness, envy, listlessness, or sport, made all things—made Caliban himself. Caliban considers what he would do if he had the power and thinks of Setebos as doing the same. Suppose Caliban could make a live bird out of clay, a bird that could fly; he would break its leg off if he wanted to, or give it more legs. And Setebos does absolutely as he likes, too, knows no law but his own caprice and is entirely governed by caprice in his actions toward the things he has made, neither loving nor hating. Just as Caliban does with the crabs. He watches them going down to the sea, lets twenty pass him, and stones the twenty-first; throws a worm to one, two worms to another. "As it likes me each time, I do; so does he." But Caliban thinks also what he would do if the creature he had made grew proud of its doings, for he thinks Setebos is able to make things with powers he (Setebos) himself does

not possess. Caliban has made a rude musical instrument. Suppose it were to grow proud of the poor music it made, and thought to claim credit for it. "I make the cry my maker can not make with his great round mouth. He must blow through mine!" He imagines the reed saying, "Well, then, would not Caliban smash it with his foot?" And of course Setebos does just the same—destroys his own work out of resentment and envy.

But Setebos, he thinks, has a particular spite against poor Caliban, just as, on the other hand, he favors Prospero. No reason; just caprice of the god. Caliban has built a trap for the turtles, and a wave comes and sweeps it away—the work of six months gone in a moment. And Setebos has sent down a ball of fire to kill him; it struck where half an hour before he had been sleeping in the shade. Still in his monstrous mind he justifies the god. Above all things, he himself must be free to do as he likes. He knows and can imagine no rule to guide conduct excepting caprice. And Setebos must do as he likes also. Caliban can understand that the thing which would seem most hate-

ful to Setebos would be the supposition that he is bound to act uniformly or consistently.

And further than this, Caliban must not seem happy. Setebos would be jealous. Whenever he feels happy and content he must do his best to seem wretched. He hates the god, but he dares not let his hatred appear; no, he must fawn upon him, praise him, grovel before him.

The finish of the poem is fine. A raven flies across Caliban's line of vision and he immediately falls into great fear. To his morbid imagination the raven has been listening, a winged policeman of the god Setebos, and he cries aloud in terror:

There scuds his raven that has told him all!
It was fool's play, this prattling! Ha! the wind
Shoulders the pillared dust, death's house o' the move,
And fast invading fires begin! white blaze—
A tree's head snaps—and there, there, there, there, there,
His thunder follows! Fool to gibe at him!
Lo! 'lieth flat and loveth Setebos!
'Maketh his teeth meet through his upper lip,
Will let those quails fly, will not eat this month
One little mess of whelks, so he may 'scape!

And so through promises of self-punishment

and self-denial Caliban hopes to deceive Setebos, the god whom he imagines to be altogether such a creature as himself.

Now this picture of the poet is very true to life. Through generation after generation, multitudes of men have looked into the clouded mirror of their own consciousness and taken for God a sort of monstrous distorted image of themselves. But the God whom the Bible brings to us as the key to the universe is a moral God, who lays a moral claim upon me—a claim not only on my mind and admiration, but upon my heart and my affections. A God not only great and wise, but who sends Jesus Christ to me, wearing my flesh, sharing my grief, tempted in all points like as I am, to teach me to say "Our Father, which art in heaven." As one of the greatest of English preachers once said: "If Christ taught one thing more clearly than another, it was that man should be brought face to face with God, and that nothing was grand in character except what grew out of the love and fear of God." God!—God!—that is the great theme of Jesus Christ. The splendor of God is on every page, in every parable, in every promise;

and no righteousness that is merely etiquette, social propriety, good-breeding, will stand the test of the final judgment held in the presence of God who created us, who has loved us with infinite love, and given us Christ to reveal God to us, and to save us from all our sins.

Do not misunderstand me. It is a grand thing for a man to be moral, whatever may be the cause or basis of that morality, but the only morality which can be relied upon must be based upon deep and lasting faith in God as the moral Ruler and Father of mankind.

In South Africa they sometimes come across yellow diamonds. Mind you, they are diamonds, and not pebbles. They are really diamonds, but no king would ever put one of them into his crown. And there is many a man and many a woman to-day who is a yellow diamond. Their morality is on the surface. The morality of society, the morality of etiquette, but they have not been transformed in the mind and spirit, and they do not walk in the love and fear of God, and, therefore, God will never know them in the day when He makes up His jewels.

I long above everything else to arouse you to a keen sense of your own responsibility to God. I would that you could see, with eyes made clear by the Holy Spirit, the real wickedness of your sin against God. It might fill you with terror, it might fill your eyes with tears, but it would be the beginning of joy greater than you have ever known. On that dark night when Peter had denied his Lord, when the cock crew and Peter saw his sin, he went out and wept bitterly, but it was the beginning of nobler and happier things for Peter. Oh, that I might rouse you to that true and real repentance of sin that would cause you, like Peter, to choose for life and death, for time and eternity, to stand for righteousness and for God! that I might awaken you to sing with the poet:

If life is always a warfare
  Between the right and the wrong,
And good is fighting with evil
  For ages and eons long—

Fighting with eager cohorts,
  With banners pierced and torn,
Shining with sudden splendor,
  Wet with the dew of morn,—

If all the forces of heaven,
  And all the forces of sin,
Are met in the infinite struggle
  The souls of the world to win,—

If God's is the awful battle
  Where the darkling legions ride—
Hasten to sword and to saddle!
  Lord, let me fight on Thy side!

A WORLD OF CHAOS

"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."—Gen. 1:2.

IT is almost impossible to picture the world at this stage in its history. Imagination has little to play upon. It is a world before day. Darkness covers the earth, and there is no luminary to light up its desolation. The mountains with their picturesque forms, and the valleys with their fertile possibilities, had not yet risen into being. The great clock of time, with its dial plate of day and night, marked by sun and moon and stars, had not yet been set up in the hall of the universe. It was a moving world, yet dead. It had life, yet nothing lived. It was a chaotic mass full of infinite possibilities, but hopeless save that it was in the hands of the God who created it. If there had been a man at that time with eyes to peer through the darkness on that heaving

mass of matter, he could not have dreamed of the world, which was to be developed out of such a beginning. Only God, all-powerful, all-wise, and infinitely good, could have wrought that divine transformation.

I

Now this chaos of the world before dawn is not unlike the conditions of the sinning soul which has lost the control over the will and become the prey of warring passions and evil habits. Many a man conscious of this chaotic condition in his own heart and life has been ready to cry out in the spirit of Paul's agonizing appeal: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Many a man trying to do right, yet powerless in his own strength, weakened as he is by yielding to sin, has been ready to exclaim: "Why this strange persistent failure? Why this tremor at the heart? Why is the hand still put out to pluck that which we know to be forbidden? Why do the feet turn again down the paths which lead to death? Again it is the old cause—the thing that I ought to

do, I do not; the thing that I would not, that I do. Why can not I do what I want? I, who mean well, yet fail in every determination for righteousness? I am somehow guilty, I am the secret of the whole trouble; I, in my nerveless will, with my perilous imagination, with my clouded conscience, with my hasty thoughts, I somehow explain the continued failure. Back to myself I turn in an agony of self-detection. My soul is a chaos of conflicting passions and desires. Oh, miserable man that I am! Oh, my God, it is I that have sinned against Thee and done this evil in Thy sight."

II

There is no hope for this chaos of soul unless there comes order out of chaos through the mercy of God. I have been reading recently a very interesting letter from a Japanese soldier, who says that about ten years ago, while out walking, hearing the sound of singing, he entered a Christian church in which a number of men and women were singing hymns. He remained and listened to a sermon on God, but he would not believe

in a foreign god. He went again and again for several years. The sermons had no effect on him, and the missionary was unable to make him understand anything. So he passed those days as a man with no religion, and for two years preceding the war between Japan and Russia he even ceased going to church. Early in the war he was ordered to the front. He had then about his body twenty charms, receievd from as many shrines, for his protection. He was ordered to join the Port Arthur besieging army, and participated in many battles. In every battle he saw many of his comrades fall, fully proving the worthlessness of the charms they had carried. Uneasiness came into his heart. He began to be aware of the foolishness of worshiping idols. Many questions arose in his mind. "If I die, where will my soul go?" "Will it have to wander about, finding nowhere to settle? Or is there some fixt place to which it is destined to go?" In this way he passed three months in a distrest condition of mind. One day he was sent near to the enemy as a sentry. The sun set and a dark night came on. Silence prevailed all around him, only broken by the occasional

reports of guns. Loneliness increased the anxiety of his heart, and he thought of home. Then suddenly, as suddenly as the vision came to Paul on the way to Damascus, at midnight instead of midday, the Holy Spirit brought to this lonely soldier's mind and heart a full interpretation and revelation of all that Christian missionary had preached to him, and he realized that there was a living and a true God, the Creator of the world, who protects us and is rich in love, and will give us what we need if we ask Him with faith.

For the first time in his life, the soldier turned his face upward to heaven and prayed to God. The answer was immediate. He at once regained courage, for he could feel that God was protecting him at all times and wherever he might be. And so order came out of chaos in his heart, and perfect peace reigned. Since then he has been growing wonderfully in a knowledge of Christ and in the graces of the Christian life. The soldier closes his most remarkable letter with this striking paragraph: "I do not covet worldly treasures any more, but those given by Him, which shall neither rust nor be lost. Jesus

promised us that He would be with us till the end of the world, and so I will not shrink from any duty. I am protected by His hands, and am working for the sake of the Gospel. Jesus is calling to sinners all the time, and it is our duty to make the people know this call. Tho the path is rugged, I shall pass over it with ease when the Lord is with me. I thank God day and night, and have no anxiety nor fear."

III

The hope of the chaotic world, and the hope of the sinning soul, is all in the brooding Spirit of God seeking to bring order out of chaos, to bring life out of death, light out of darkness, and beauty out of barrenness and ruin. It was God's Spirit brooding over the formless world that put the sun in the heavens, that filled the world with warmth and light, that made the earth green with herbage, that caused forests to grow upon the hillsides, with birds to sing in them, and planted flowers to exhale their perfume

in the valleys. So God's Spirit broods over the heart of man that has fallen into darkness and chaos through sin. As a mother broods over her child, so the Spirit of God broods over the soul that has sinned, seeking to dispel the darkness and to bring back again life and light and beauty. When the Spirit of God brooded over the world of chaos, no human eye, had there been one to look upon it, could have seen anything beautiful or lovable in it. But God saw the possibilities that were there, when once there had been lavished upon it His infinite skill and loving care. So in the poor sinning soul, which seems all ugly and repulsive to the human eye, God sees that which His love and skill can bring forth, and continues to brood over the wrecked and broken man, oftentimes when all others have lost hope. Dr. W. J. Dawson said in one of his recent sermons that there is a buried magnificence in many a man of whom you think ill, and have reason to think ill, just as yonder, out in the vast desert of the East, but a little way down beneath the dust, the blown sand, the drift of centuries, there often lies a city with all its temples, its palaces, its marbles,

and its paintings, perfect and complete. For centuries many men rode to and fro across the desert, and the great caravans passed from East to West, and no one saw anything more than the desert and the drifted sand there. Yet all the time there is the hidden city; and some day there comes one who knows, and he begins to dig, and there comes to light a poem that was hidden, a picture that was covered up. So in many a man there is a hidden poem, there is a hidden picture, there is buried splendor. Indeed, we ought not to say in many a man—it is in every man—and the brooding Spirit of God is seeking to uncover it and bring it forth to life and power.

IV

Now, my friends, it is possible for a man or a woman to thwart the Spirit of God. We are not merely soil. Tho God broods over us ever so tenderly, and Christ comes seeking admission into our hearts that He may execute the gracious mission of the Holy

Spirit, He will not break down the door into our souls. When Sir Noel Paton painted his great picture of Christ wearing the crown of thorns, standing outside the door, knocking, he invited a very dear friend to come to his studio and look at the picture before it was put on exhibition. His friend gazed for a few moments on the beautiful figure of the Christ at the rude door, and then exclaimed in amazement, "Paton, you have made a terrible mistake here." "What mistake have I made?" said the artist. "Why, you have painted a door without a handle." "That is not a mistake," replied Paton. "That door has no handle on the outside. It is inside." I am sure there are some of you here who need to learn that lesson now. You have been waiting, it may be, for some tidal wave of sentiment or emotion, something you could not resist, to sweep you off your feet and into the kingdom of God. Salvation will never come to you in that way. The door-knob is on the inside of your heart. "Whosoever will" may open the door and give welcome to the Savior. Christ stands there knocking. How strongly Harriet Beecher Stowe has drawn the picture in her poem:

Knocking, knocking, ever knocking!
Who is there?
'Tis a pilgrim, strange and kingly,
Never such was seen before.
Ah, sweet soul, for such a wonder
Undo the door.

No, that door is hard to open,
Hinges rusty, latch is broken;
Bid Him go!
Wherefore, with that knocking dreary,
Scare the sleep from one so weary,
Say Him, "No."

Knocking, knocking, ever knocking!
What, still there?
Oh, sweet soul, but once behold Him,
With the glory-crownèd hair;
And those eyes so strange and tender,
Waiting there.
Open, open, once behold Him—
Him, so fair.

Ah, that door! Why wilt Thou vex me,
Coming ever to perplex me?
For the key is stiffly rusty,
And the bolt is clogged and dusty.
Many-fingered ivy-vine
Seals it fast with twist and twine;
Weeds of years and years before
Choke the passage of that door.

Knocking, knocking! What, still knocking!
He still there?
What's the hour? The night is waning,
In my heart a drear complaining,
And a chilly, sad unrest.
Ah! His knocking! It disturbs me,
Scares my sleep with dreams unblest!
Give me rest,
Rest, ah rest!

Rest, dear soul, He longs to give thee;
Thou hast only dreamed of pleasure,
Dreamed of gifts and golden treasure
Dreamed of jewels in thy keeping,
Waked to weariness and weeping.
Open to thy soul's one Lover,
And thy night of dreams is over;
The true gifts He brings have seeming
More than all thy faded dreaming!

Did she open? Doth she? Will she?

So, as wondering we behold,
Grows the picture to a sign,
Prest upon your soul and mine;
For in every heart that liveth
Is that strange mysterious door;
Tho forsaken and betangled,
Ivy-gnarled and weed be-tangled,
Dusty, rusty, and forgotten,

There the piercéd hand still knocketh,
And with ever-patient watching,
With the sad eyes true and tender,
With the glory-crownèd hair,
Still a God is waiting there.

THE CREATION OF LIGHT

"And the Lord said, let there be light; and there was light."—Genesis 1:3.

MILTON, in his immortal poem, "Paradise Lost," represents Adam as asking Raphael to relate to him why and how the world was created. And Raphael goes on to tell him, in the poem, how God, after the expulsion of Satan and his angels from heaven, because of their pride and rebellion, declared his purpose to create another world, peopled with other creatures, and sent His Son with a great retinue of angels to perform the work of creation. When they visited the world of chaos the divine voice exclaimed:

"Silence, ye troubled waves! and thou deep, peace!
. . . . . Your discord end!"
Nor stayed; but on the wings of cherubim
Uplifted, in paternal glory rode
Far into Chaos, and the world unborn;
For Chaos heard his voice: him all his train
Followed in bright procession, to behold
Creation, and the wonders of his might.
They stayed the fervid wheels, and in his hand

He took the golden compasses, prepared
In God's eternal store, to circumscribe
This universe, and all created things;
One foot he centered and the other turn'd
Round through the vast profundity obscure,
And said, "Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds,
This be thy just circumference, O world!"
Thus God the heaven created, thus the earth.

. . . . . .

"Let there be light," said God, and forthwith light
Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,
Sprung from the deep; and from her native east
To journey through the airy gloom began,
Sphered in a radiant cloud, for yet the sun
Was not.

I

Scientific research in our own day is bringing science into far greater harmony with the Bible account of creation than was true in earlier times. It used to be asked in all seriousness by science, "How could light exist before the sun?" All such perplexity has disappeared. Modern science has discovered that light is not conditioned by perfected luminous bodies, but that light bodies are conditions of a preceding luminous element;

that is, that light could exist before the sun was created.

A century ago materialism was both fashionable and scientific. Men were boasting, "Give me the least bit of bioplasm and I will construct a universe. Everything is spontaneously generated from some other thing. Mind and matter come from the same primordial cell." In those days men were making tremendous attempts to get something out of nothing. Science was trying to get effects without causes. No reputable scientist talks that way to-day. Prof. John Fiske, one of the greatest of the modern scientists, tells us that "The impetus of modern scientific thought tends with overwhelming force toward the conception of a single First Cause, or Prime Mover, perpetually manifested from moment to moment in the changes that make up the universe." God is no longer thought of as far off, but immanent, revealing Himself in all the phenomena of the universe which He has created. The presence of God encompasses us about and illuminates all our existence. So it is true that David, writing his Psalm on the skin of some wild animal, perhaps,

and it may be in some mountain cave, nearly three thousand years ago, was in perfect agreement with modern science when he said: "Thou compassest my path and my lying down and art acquainted with all my ways. . . . Thou hast beset me behind and before. . . . Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven thou art there: If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day. The darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

II

No other figure is used so frequently in the Bible to present the goodness and glory of God as the light. David describes God as "clothed with light as a garment." And again he exclaims, "The Lord is my light

and my salvation." St. John in his first epistle makes the wonderful declaration that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." The same figure is used to represent to us the glorious personality of Jesus. He Himself makes the bold declaration, "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness." Malachi, looking down through the centuries, saw the Christ rising on the world as "The Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His wings." And about the time of the birth of Jesus it was declared that those who lived in the valley of darkness had seen a great light.

Christ declares that those who follow Him and become His disciples also become the "light of the world." Paul describes Christians as "the children of the light and of the day." In his letter to the Philippians he declares that Christians ought, in the midst of a crooked and perverse age, to hold forth the word of life as a bright torch. John said that Christians should "walk in the light as children of the light." And our Savior has given the splendid promise that the day shall come when the righteous shall "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

III

As the natural light illumines the world, so the spiritual light seen in God's Word, in the life of Jesus, and shining in our hearts and consciences, convicts us of sin and reveals to us the way of salvation. During the life of Jesus one of the most frequent miracles He wrought was to open the eyes of the blind and give them sight. And His miracles were not confined to the opening of the physical eye, but extended to the eye of the soul as well. Many whom He met were like Zacchæus, with no outlook beyond his money bags, with no soul above the gathering of worldly goods. But after Zacchæus had met with Jesus, had looked into His eyes and listened to His conversation, a great light shone about him and within him, and he realized that money was not everything. In his shame and penitence he declared that he would give back fourfold where he had gotten money wrongfully, and half the balance he would give to the poor.

Peter was proud of himself and had a great deal of self-righteousness, but one

day when he was with Jesus the light shone into his heart and so revealed his real self to him that he fell at the feet of the Master and cried aloud, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Then there was that poor lost woman who had been going her way of sin, indifferent and hardened, until she met Jesus. But when she looked into His face, and the light of His eyes showed her the sin of her own heart, she melted under that gaze, and you remember how she came to the rich man's house, when He was at dinner, with her alabaster box of costly perfume, and poured it upon His head, and how in her sense of gratitude and unworthiness she washed His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and heard the words of Jesus, which were like sunshine after rain to her soul, telling her that all her sins were forgiven.

She sat and wept beside His feet, the weight
  Of sin oppress her heart, for all the blame
  And the poor malice of the worldly shame
To her was past, extinct, and out of date,
Only the sin remained, the leprous state;

She would be melted by the heart of love,
By fires far fiercer than are blown to prove
And purge the silver ore adulterate.

She sat and wept, and with her untressed hair
She wiped the feet she was so blest to touch,
And He wiped off the soiling of despair
From her sweet soul because she loved so much.
I am a sinner full of doubts and fears,
Make me a humble thing of love and tears.

IV

As the natural light illumines the outer world of sight and sound, so the spiritual light illumines our relation to our fellow men. Jesus Christ has shown us in the light of His words and life that there is as much hope for one class of men as for another, and that there are the possibilities for the worst and the possibilities for the best in every human being. As we come to know Jesus and live in the light of His countenance we know that we are not "Egyptian snakes in a basket," as Thomas Carlyle said, each trying to get his head above another, but that we are brothers. When the people said of Jesus, "This man

receiveth sinners, and eateth with them," tho they did not understand it, they had discovered the key-note of His life and gospel. The most degraded and neglected man was, and is now, dear to Jesus.

A fellow minister tells us how he was walking down the street one day when he saw a woman, good and pure, refined and cultured, walking with a man whose face was red with drink, whose form and look and manners bore the marks of deepest dissipation. He stept to her side and said, "Madam, why are you with this man?" She little heeded him at first as she supported her disreputable companion's unsteady steps. "Madam," the minister said, "why do you not hand him over to the police?" She drew herself up and with a righteously indignant anger mingled with pathos, said: "Sir! I am his mother. I am his mother." So Jesus Christ says of each lost man, "I am his brother!" And of every poor sinning woman, "I am her brother!" We must learn this lesson from Jesus. The light of heaven which has shined in our hearts is not for ourselves alone, but for our brothers and sisters

about us. Shakespeare, in "Measure for Measure," says:

Heaven doth with us as we with torches do.
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touched
But to fine issues.

The Apostle Paul was of the same mind when he said, "I am debtor both to the Greeks and the barbarians." He felt that, having received the grace of God in the forgiveness of his sins, he owed the Gospel to every other man in the world who did not have it. I would that God would put the same feeling heavily upon every one of our hearts. The sinners in this wicked city would soon be won to Christ if all Christians felt as they ought their obligation to share with others their faith in Jesus. The more we have received, the richer our own experience of the love of God, the more intense should be our sense of obligation to carry its helpfulness to those who need it most. Jesus said that even "the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," and Whittier, his heart

warmed with the same thought, beautifully says:

Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
What may Thy service be?
Not name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But only following Thee.
We bring no ghastly holocaust,
We pile no graven stone,
He serves the best who loves the most,
His brothers and Thy own.

GOODNESS AND LIGHT

"God saw the light, that it was good."—Gen. 1:4.

THIS is a declaration that in the sight of God light is good in itself. There was as yet nothing beautiful for it to shine upon. The mountains had not yet lifted themselves from above the waste of waters. There were no forests, no valleys, no wide-reaching plains, no birds, no beauty of any kind except the beauty which is inherent in light itself. But God declares that the light is good, whatever it may shine upon. Light is God's chariot, which conveys heat and purifies and cleanses all upon which it shines. All that was to be good and beautiful in the world was to be helped into being by the light. And so it is that all goodness in the hearts and lives of men has this intimate and dependent relation upon light.

I

Goodness loves the light, having nothing to fear; while evil seeks the darkness, wishing to hide. Christ brings this out very clearly in His talk with Nicodemus, when He says: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." The man that is doing right is full of courage. He has nothing to fear. God is his Heavenly Father, and with a feeling of childlike boldness, conscious of that fatherly love, he finds his refuge in God who is light and in whom there is no darkness at all. The man who has no secrets from God, who is conscious of his sincerity and genuineness, feels sure of his reception in God's presence. The poet has given us a beautful description of

the human father, feeling the joy of his child in his arms:

Beat upon mine, little heart,
Beat, beat, beat.
Beat, upon mine, you are all my own
From your dear deep eyes to your feet.
You are mine, all mine, my sweet,
My own little sweet.
Sleep in my arms, my child, my bliss,
And I give you this, and I give you this,
And I close your eyes with a kiss upon kiss,
My son, my own.
Father, indeed, will watch you grow,
And gather you roses wherever you go,
And find you white heather wherever it blow,
My own, my son.
So, beat, beat upon mine, little heart,
Beat, beat, beat, upon mine.
You are all my own, from your deep blue eyes to your feet,
You are mine, all mine, my sweet,
My own little sweet.

So the man or the woman who feels that the heart is true and sincere in God's sight, delights to rest on the bosom of God, assured that he or she is armored and sheltered in the light of God.

II

If we live in the light, we shall reflect the light of heaven in our lives. You may have witnessed some of the wonders of that rare and marvelous metal known as radium. A little particle, hardly bigger than a pin's head, if placed behind a screen of florescent metal, may be seen to be sending out a stream of sparks. These sparks give light and heat, yet the marvel is that the radium itself loses no whit of its energy. It is like the miracle of the burning bush. It emits light and heat at no apparent cost to itself. It is unconsumed, tho it is forever pouring out chemical and electrical energies. When placed in the coldness of an atmosphere of liquid air, even when placed in the intense frigidity of liquid hydrogen, it still pours out more light and heat. Now the spiritual light which pours forth from a genuinely good man or a pure and holy woman is like that. If we have Christ in us, the hope of glory; if God dwells in our hearts by faith, then it makes no difference what adversities and trials may chill the circumstances in

which we live, we shall pour forth this spiritual light and warmth.

The scientist will take a common bit of glass and put it near to a bit of radium, and after being there a little while it will receive from the radium what the scientist calls "emanation," and for a while afterward this glass will give out the same sort of light, heat, and energy that radium does. Of course, it does not last. It passes off, but not for some time. It never comes back unless the glass is placed again where the radium can influence it. The scientist can keep the glass radio-active if he puts it near the radium every now and then. Otherwise it backslides into just a common bit of glass, with no powers of radiance at all. How suggestive this is in the spiritual world. There are many radio-active Christians whose radio-activity wears off very quickly in the midst of the worldliness surrounding them, and sometimes it is never renewed. We are the "light of the world" only as we keep near to Christ and receive the divine light, the holy emanation. It is a terrible thing for us to go with darkened lives in a world which needs light so much,

when we may shine with the very light of God by living in close touch with Him

III

Our theme should teach us that the greatest danger that can come to any man or woman is to have in the heart and life secret sins. The Word says, "Whoso covereth his sins shall not prosper," and the whole history of mankind shows us that there is nothing so sure to work disaster as a hidden sin.

A hunter not long ago saw an eagle rise from the brow of a hill, winging its way with bold, strong flight, circle on circle, into the depths of the sky. He watched it until it had become but a mere speck in the far-off upper air, when suddenly, to his great amazement, the great bird grew larger and dropt down, down, down, until it crashed on the rocks at his side. He ran to it, and on examining the bruised and battered body, he found that under the wing of the eagle a little poisonous

viper had fastened itself. Resting at noonday, this small but terrible enemy had taken refuge under its wing, and had hissed death through its veins. It was only a little viper, but it put an end to that bold flight and was the cause of that terrible fall. Friends, beware of little sins! Beware of secret sins that fasten to your life! You may think you can trifle and dally with them, but in their bite there is poison and in their fang there is death. We need to pray with the psalmist, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults; keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me."

But perhaps some one says, out of a troubled heart, "Such advice would have been good once, but I have already been bitten by the viper. Sin has already poisoned my blood. The clutches of an evil habit are already upon me. How shall I escape from sin and be able to stand again in the presence of God in innocence and courage?" I would to God that every one who is conscious of sin would awaken to ask that question in all genuineness and sincerity. For unless there be such an

awakening there is a terrible reckoning coming. Let me presume, as God's messenger, to speak plainly to your inner soul concerning that secret sin which is gnawing at your vitals. You would not have your acquaintances know about it for the world. "If God's right hand were to fling wide the door that guards that secret chamber, you would be despised by those who speak your name with honor and regard. Oh! the destruction wrought by secret sins, which no physician sees, nor surgeon probes, nor medicine cures; they eat on and on until we die, and then we find that, tho we may have hidden them from men, God saw them." Are you carrying the burden of a secret sin? Does fear sit on your pillow when you lie down at night, and whisper of detection in your sleeping ear, so that you dream in agony, and wake with shuddering cries upon your lips? My friend, God sees it all, and that sin so carefully hidden must face the judgment day and the light of the great white throne. But, thank God, there is one way you can deal with it, and that is yourself to bring your sin to judgment at Jesus' feet, and have it cleansed from your soul.

Only the atoning blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse the heart of its hidden sins.

At the Parliament of Religions, at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, some years ago, where were gathered the representatives of every religion on the earth, Dr. Joseph Cook, speaking of the certainties of religion, said, "Lady Macbeth hath blood-stains on her hands," and he asked the representatives of each religion what they could do to remove those stains. He waited for an answer, but all were silent. After waiting until the hush was like the house of death he solemnly exclaimed, "Nothing but the blood of Jesus!" Solemn as the occasion was, the audience broke out in applause, agreeing that there is nothing that can remove the stain of a guilty conscience except the blood of Jesus Christ. Christ conquered on that open platform. Mozoomdar, the leader of the new dispensation in India, bowed his head and said over and over again, "The gentle Jesus." Every religious teacher there bowed before Him, and the choir of a thousand trained voices sang the Hallelujah Chorus, and the eyes of the great audience of reverent men and women

were turned toward heaven, as tho they could see the hallelujahs going up to His throne, and watched to see them caught up by the angels on high. All glory to Christ, who has the power to cleanse the sin from the darkened soul of man and fill it with the glorious light of goodness!

IV

It is here that we find the hope of the world. We look about us and are often tempted to discouragement. There is so much darkness, so much misery and sin in the world. And then we come back to God's Book and we find hope. Our hope is in the blest promise of God that the true light is to shine on until the whole world is illuminated. The noblest privilege any man or woman can have is to share in the battle going on among men for a bright and pure world. When I ask you to become a Christian I am calling upon you to become a soldier in that glorious struggle. We are not discouraged by the outlook of to-day or to-morrow, but in the strength and

light of God we see the day of triumph coming.

The fog that is on the world to-day,
  It will be on the world to-morrow;
Not all the strength of the sun can drive
  His bright spear's furrow.

Yesterday and to-day
  Have been heavy with care and sorrow,
I should faint if I did not see
  The day that is after to-morrow.

Hope in to-day there is none,
  Nor from yesterday can I borrow.
But I think that I feel the wind
  Of the dawn that is after to-morrow.

The cause of the people I serve to-day
  In impatience and sorrow,
Once again is defeated, but yet 'twill be won
  In the day that is after to-morrow.

And for me with spirit elate,
  The fire and the fog I press through,
For heaven shines under the cloud
  Of the day that is after to-morrow.

DARKNESS AND LIGHT

"And God divided the light from the darkness."—Gen. 1:-4.

And that is what God is trying to do all the while in this world. He is seeking to bring the whole world into the light, and crowd back ignorance and sin and sorrow into "the outer darkness." That is the mission of Christianity upon the earth, and nothing that has ever existed on the earth has been such a tremendous success. We have always lived with so much of the light of Christ about us that many are misled and fail to appreciate how dark the world would be without Christ. Dr. Young J. Allen, a missionary to China for the last forty years, in a recent address at Birmingham, Alabama, said that he had never understood the Gospel until he went to China, and he proceeded to say that in seeking for some way whereby he might illustrate and measure the Gospel to our

American comprehension he selected this illustration: He had often passed in sight of Pike's Peak. Pike's Peak is something more than fourteen thousand feet high, but it is not fourteen thousand feet high as we see it. It appears to be about six thousand or seven thousand feet high. Why? Because it is on a great plateau or tableland which is itself from six to eight thousand feet high. Well, how are you going to measure, how are you going to see this Pike's Peak fourteen thousand feet high? You can not do it. It makes no such impression on you. You go by and say, "That is Pike's Peak, and they say it is fourteen thousand feet high; and the imagination looks up, but the mind does not and will not go up fourteen thousand feet. You can not reach up there. It is not there. What is the matter? It is because of this great plateau that swallows it up. Now, Dr. Allen says if we go from Pike's Peak to San Francisco, and on to Japan, we see another mountain, one of the most impressive in the world, called Fujiyama. There it stands. There is no plateau. It begins down at sea-level, the waves of the sea lap its very

foundation; but it towers and towers and towers until its top literally kisses the sky, and is seen one hundred and fifty miles at sea. Sea-captains say that sometimes they see it gilded by the sun, and then it seems like a giant chrysanthemum, away up there in the sky. There it stands, grand and glorious in its form and coloring. The Japanese worship it; and travelers wherever they go can not take their eyes from it, and are always searching for it if they lose it. Now there is a mountain that represents the thing from the bottom to the top, and you see it all. The missionary took these two mountains to represent Christianity—the one as we see it over here, the other as they see it over there in the midst of the darkness of heathenism. We who were born in a Christian country have always lived on this high table-land. We have always lived on this high general level of Christian civilization, and we have no conception of how high it is. We have no idea of the pit out of which our race has been dug. If we would know, we must go back into history. If you want to see Pike's Peak, you must dig it out, and dig out its

roots and find the sea-level, and then stand and look at it; it would be a glorious object, and it would stand for all that is claimed for it. If you want to get at Christianity and know its towering height, on whose base and on whose bosom you rest, you must go back into history and dig it out.

When you take that backward trail, hunting the backward track of your own race, our own ancestors, you will go back and back and back until you come to a slave-market in Rome. And one day St. Augustine came around to look at the slaves in the market, and he had enough of the light of Christ in his heart to cause him to see in these northern slaves, these painted savages, men and women for whom Christ died, and he longed to have a part in their salvation. As he looked upon them he declared that he could see "the angel in them," and so the Christians in Rome sent missionaries up into that Saxon land, and our ancestors were converted to Christ. It is out of a darkness like that that we were lifted up into the light and glory of our modern civilization.

II

Now, what God is seeking to do for the world, He is seeking to do for every man and woman among us as individuals. No man need walk a dark path in this world. Jesus says: "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

In his poem, "Merlin and the Gleam," Tennyson is supposed to have written out of his heart a comment on his own life. It recalls his youth, his manhood, his early poems, the great work which employed his thoughts in maturer years, and then turns toward the future and finds that the ideal which has lighted him from the start is still lighting him to the finish. From youth to old age he has followed the Gleam, and he is now following it home to heaven.

There is in the poem something more than an autobiography of Tennyson. There is in it light upon all life and upon every struggle for the highest and best things. There are young men who hear me, and young women, too, whose hearts have been

stirred with noble longings and holy dreams to hold themselves to the highest living and the truest ambitions, who might well sing with the poet:

Mighty the Wizard
Who found me at sunrise
Sleeping, and woke me
And learned me Magic!
Great the Master,
And sweet the Magic,
When over the valley,
In early summers,
Over the mountain,
On human faces,
And all around me,
Moving to melody,
Floated the Gleam.

So you remember when your Master, the divine Christ, awoke in you a longing for holy living, for beautiful thoughts and achievements, for generous self-sacrifice and fellowship, and with a new joy and a thrill of holy ambition unknown before you followed the gleam of this blest Light out to the struggle of life.

But there came days of shadow and of trial, and out of your own experience you

might still join with the poet when he sings:

> Once at the croak of a Raven who crost it,
> A barbarous people,
> Blind to the magic
> And deaf to the melody,
> Snarl'd at and curst me,
> A demon vext me,
> The light retreated,
> The landskip darken'd,
> The melody deaden'd
> The Master whisper'd,
> "Follow the Gleam."

And if you harkened to that whisper of the Master, you followed the gleam of the heavenly light through temptations and trials, and are all the stronger for them to-day. But if you closed your ears to the whisper of the Master, and lost sight of the divine Gleam, then your heart is heavy and sad. If you are in such a place now, I beg you harken to the whisper of the Christ, and no matter how many demons snarl or tempt, follow the Gleam, and you shall walk safely. One of the worst lies the devil ever tells us when we are in the midst of some dark place of temptation, is

that the Christian life is all like that, that it is always gloomy and heavy and sad. Nothing can be more false. In spite of the struggles against evil and sin, in order to maintain the Christian character, the Christian life is the sweetest and happiest life in the world. See how the poet portrays it in his own experience:

Then to the melody,
Over a wilderness
Gliding, and glancing at
Elf of the woodland,
Gnome of the cavern,
Griffin and Giant,
And dancing of Fairies
In desolate hollows,
And wraiths of the mountain,
And rolling of dragons
By warble of water,
Or cataract music,
Of falling torrents,
Flitted the Gleam.

Down from the mountain
And over the level,
And streaming and shining on
Silent river,
Silvery willow,
Pasture and plowland,

Innocent maidens,
Garrulous children,
Homestead and harvest,
Reaper and gleaner,
And rough-ruddy faces
Of lowly labor,
Slided the Gleam.

And so it may be with you. For every experience with awakening ravens and demons of temptation and trial, there shall be multiplied experiences when the path shall be by the shining river, through the fragrant orchards and gardens, and in joyous fellowship with the good and true.

And he who follows the heavenly light finds that even the dark valley and the shadow of death are illuminated and glorified by it. How splendidly Tennyson says:

And broader and brighter
The Gleam flying onward,
Wed to the melody,
Sang thro' the world;
And slower and fainter,
Old and weary,
But eager to follow,
I saw, whenever
In passing it glanced upon

Hamlet or city,
That under the Crosses
The dead man's garden,
The mortal hillock,
Would break into blossom;

And so to the land's
Last limit I came.
I can no longer,
But die rejoicing,
For thro' the Magic
Of Him the Mighty,
Who taught me in childhood,
There on the border
Of boundless Ocean,
And all but in Heaven
Hovers the Gleam.

I went one day to see a white-haired old man who had followed the Gleam for many years, and was only waiting for his transfer to the world beyond, and I found in him the same precious hope and faith. There was no shadow on his brow; there was no fear in his heart. He felt that he was walking in the valley of death, but the heavenly Gleam lighted it up, and he did not walk in darkness.

But I must not fail in my message to you

who have not get given yourself over to the divine Guide. Christ, who is "the Light of the world," will be, if you will open your heart and life to Him, the inspiration, the comfort, and the guide to your personal life. No earthly wisdom is sufficient to guide the immortal soul. Only the heavenly light, only the heart of our divine Lord, is tender enough and wise enough to give us the inspiration and the direction that each of us needs. Listen again to the poet as he concludes his song with this inspiring word of exhortation. If it had been written personally for your ear and your eye, it could not have been more truly fitted to the needs of your soul:

Not of the sunlight,
Not of the moonlight,
Not of the starlight!
O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,
Call your companions,
Launch your vessel
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it,
Follow the Gleam.

The Christ gleam falls across your path now, and there is light enough if you will follow it to lead you to forgiveness and peace. Nothing else can save you from the darkness which comes to all who have sinned. Not long ago, in New York, a man died the death of a suicide, who had in his possession up to the time of his death many millions of dollars. He made his money in a shameful way, and he could not bear the public censure. He had traded his soul for his wealth, and after he got it had no peace with it, because in getting it he had lost his soul. If that man could have exchanged all his millions for a light, cheerful heart, that looked into the future with gladness, what a wonderful bargain it would have been. But he had sinned against his own soul. He had turned his face away from the light and there could only be one ending, and that was the impenetrable gloom of the "outer darkness." God save any one of you from such a tragedy! I give you the blest invitation of Christ to come to the light, and in the sweet light that shines upon the mercy seat find the forgiveness of your sins and the hope of eternal life.

MAN'S GLORIOUS DAY

"And God called the light day."—Gen. 1:5.

THERE is nothing more glorious in the universe than the day. No other miracle is so marvelous as this. God uses it as a challenge against unbelief in spiritual things. Through the mouth of Jeremiah He says, "Thus saith the Lord: If ye can break my covenant of the day . . . . Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant." Did you ever stop to think what a miracle it is to make the day, and cause its return at the appropriate time through the centuries? George Lansing Taylor once made a study of the mechanical enginery that would be necessary to make the day, and he discovered that to run this massive sphere, eight thousand miles in diameter, by the ratio of size of shaft to size of paddle-wheel on a large steamboat, the earth must be slung on a steel shaft two hundred and fifty miles in diameter and ten thousand miles long. It must be driven by an engine whose cylinder should measure twelve hundred miles bore and two thousand

miles stroke, having a piston-rod one hundred miles thick, and two thousand five hundred miles long, working by a connecting-rod three thousand miles long on a crank of one thousand miles arm, with a wrist two hundred miles long and fifty miles thick. The piston of this engine will make but one revolution daily; but to do that it will travel four thousand miles, at an average velocity of nearly three miles a minute. The working capacity of this engine will be about fourteen thousand million horse-power. It must be controlled by an automatic governor of infallible accuracy, and supplied with inexhaustible fuel and oil; and so run on day and night, never starting a bolt, nor heating a journal, nor wearing out a box, century after century. The iron bed-frame for this machine must be ten thousand miles square and four thousand miles high, and not tremble a hair under the stroke that drives the equatorial rim of this flying-wheel globe up to a steady velocity of seventeen and one-half miles a minute, twenty times the velocity of a flying express-train! Who will take the contract to build and run this engine?

Who'll furnish a place where it may stand? Who'll build the masonry underpinning for that vast bed-frame? But it can have no underpinning. The vast mass must fly through space in the earth's orbit around the sun, with a velocity of more than eleven hundred miles a minute. The Armstrong one-hundred-ton steel rifle sends its two-thousand-pound steel projectile at the rate of sixteen hundred feet per second clean through a solid wrought-iron plate twenty-two inches thick. But God fires this globe, eight thousand miles in diameter, through space with sixty and one-half times the velocity of the monster projectile, and two thousand times the velocity of an express-train. And our engine that gives it its day-and-night rotation must fly with it at that speed, and never lose a stroke!

Now, it was our God who built this flying-machine, and set it at work revolving out our day and night, and flashing the rosy miracle of sunrise and sunset around the world! And it was that same God who also framed the plan of our redemption through Jesus Christ, and set up His kingdom on the earth; and He says to the caviler to-day:

"When you can stop the one, you can stop the other! Just try your hand on my day-and-night engine first, and then see about Christianity."

Our life in this world has been very commonly compared to the natural day. There is an old common-law proverb which says that, "Every man has his day in court." So each of us is granted his day of human life, and where our lives run the normal, natural course the figure of the day is very striking. Our birth is like the sunrise. Childhood is our morning, and in youth the sun climbs high in the heavens. High-noon is middle age. As we grow older the sun descends toward the West, and death is the sunset of man's brief but splendid day. This illustration ought to be full of teaching for every one of us.

I

The thought of life as a day should be to us *an inspiration to activity.* It is swiftly passing. On John Ruskin's desk he kept a paper-weight made of a beautiful block of chalcedony. Carved upon it was the word

"To-day." In Ruskin's thought every day was a king and should be obeyed to the utmost limit while it lasted. So Christ's command comes to us, "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard." There is nothing said about to-morrow. To-day is the all-important hour of duty for every one of us. The question that should come to us every evening is not what we are dreaming about doing in some future time, but what have we accomplished to-day. There are many people who excuse themselves for present failures because of vague and hazy dreams of what they expect to do in some indefinite future. Nothing is more insidious than such a habit as that. Some of you are picturing to yourselves how when you are old you are going to be a noble, benevolent, gentle-hearted Christian man, or you are going to be a sweet-spirited, pure-souled Christian woman. You think of the noblest man or woman you know, one that fascinates you and charms you by the chastened beauty and Christlikeness of personality, and you dream that you are going to be like that. But to-day you are not a Christian. To-day you are living without God, and with but little care of

your spirit or for the culture of your soul. Do not be deceived. If the future is to be beautiful and splendid, to-day must be preparing for it. Some one sings of just such a danger as yours:

We shall do much in the years to come,
But what have we done to-day?
We shall give our gold in a princely sum,
But what did we give to-day?
We shall lift the heart and dry the tear,
We shall plant a hope in the place of fear,
We shall speak the words of love and cheer,
But what did we speak to-day?

We shall be so kind in the after while,
But what have we been to-day?
We shall bring to each lonely life a smile,
But what have we brought to-day?
We shall give to truth a grander birth,
And to steadfast faith a deeper worth,
We shall feed the hungering souls of earth;
But whom have we fed to-day?

We shall reap such joys in the by and by,
But what have we sown to-day?
We shall build us mansions in the sky,
But what have we built to-day?
'Tis sweet in idle dreams to bask,
But here and now, do we our task?
Yes, this is the thing our souls must ask,
What have we done to-day?

II

The thought of life as a day ought to be *a constant warning against carelessness of life.* We can not go back over the course. You never can go back from eleven o'clock in the morning to nine o'clock and accept any privilege or perform any duty that belongs exclusively to that earlier hour. We never can go back and come again over the course of childhood or youth or middle age after once we have passed it. The doors are forever swinging shut behind us as we proceed. If we could keep in our hearts and minds a clear perception of this great fact, it would often give us pause. The careless word that wounded the heart of a friend; the unkind criticism that made the burden heavier to some weary shoulder; the blunt speech that was like a blow in the face to a man or a woman already discouraged; the harsh refusal that disheartened the budding hope of a child, how differently we would have spoken if we could have remembered clearly that we never could take it back, never could go back and change it, but

must always let it stand there, impossible to redeem. Friend, you can only go this way but once. Let us be careful what we do. How well I remember a man, whom many other people envied, saying to me one day, with the scalding tears running down his cheeks: "I would give half the years that are still left to me, even tho it were God's will I should live to be a hundred, if I could go back and change just one year of my life and make the record different!" But he could not go back. The day of life went steadily on toward the sunset.

"There is a nest of thrushes in the glen;
When we come back we'll see the glad young things,"
He said. We came not by that way again;
And time and thrushes fare on eager wings!

"Yon rose," she smiled. "But no; when we return,
I'll pluck it then." 'Twas on a summer day.
The ashes of the rose in autumn's urn
Lie hidden well. We came not back that way.

We do not pass the selfsame way again,
Or, passing by that way, no thing we find
As it before had been; but dearth or stain
Hath come upon it, or the wasteful wind.

The very earth is envious, and her arms
  Reach for the beauty that detained our eyes;
Yea, it is lost beyond the aid of charms
  If, once within our grasp, we leave the prize.

Thou traveler to the unknown ocean's brink,
  Through life's fair fields, say not, "Another day
This joy I'll prove"; for never, as I think,
  Never shall we come this selfsame way.

III

Our theme should teach us that *there is no room for despair in the sorrows and trials of life provided we trust God, and are seeking to do His will,* since the day is constantly passing and with it all the hard experiences which trouble us and try us. Some of you are carrying heavy loads. Your hearts are tender with grief. You can not see the way out, but the clouds will pass with the fleeting hour. They are not for always. Some of you are having a constant struggle in your wilderness of temptation, trying to be good. Do not lose heart. Trust God! It is not forever. It is all in the day's work. It will pass, and as the

angels came and comforted Jesus after His temptation, so they will comfort you. I remember an old story told in song which interested me in my boyhood, crystallizing around the sentence "Even this shall pass away." The story-telling poet says:

Once in Persia reigned a king
Who upon his signet-ring
Graved a maxim true and wise,
Which, if held before his eyes,
Gave him counsel at a glance
Fit for every change and chance,
Solemn words, and these are they:
"Even this shall pass away."

Trains of camels through the sand
Brought him gems from Samarcand;
Fleets of galleys through the seas
Brought him pearls to match with these.
But he counted not his gain
Treasures of the mine or main;
"What is wealth?" the king would say;
"Even this shall pass away."

In the revels of his court,
At the zenith of the sport,
When the palms of all his guests
Burned with clapping at his jests,

He, amid his figs and wine,
Cried, "Oh, loving friends of mine!
Pleasures come, but not to stay;
'Even this shall pass away.' "

Fighting on a furious field,
Once a javelin pierced his shield,
Soldiers, with a loud lament,
Bore him bleeding to his tent,
Groaning from his tortured side,
"Pain is hard to bear," he cried,
"But with patience, day by day,
'Even this shall pass away.' "

Towering in the public square,
Twenty cubits in the air,
Rose his statue carved in stone.
Then the king, disguised, unknown,
Stood before his sculptured name,
Musing meekly, "What is fame?
Fame is but a slow decay—
'Even this shall pass away.' "

Struck with palsy, sere and old,
Waiting at the Gates of Gold,
Said he with his dying breath,
"Life is done, but what is death?"
Then, in answer to the king,
Fell a sunbeam on his ring,
Showing, by a heavenly ray,
"Even this shall pass away."

THE TREASURES OF NIGHT

"And the darkness He called Night."—Gen. 1: 5.

In all languages night is the symbol for gloom and suffering. An allegory in the old Jewish Talmud teaches that the demons are all children of four daughters of Night —Lilith, Naama, Agrath, and Mahalath. Their assembling-place was on Mount Nishpah, the Mount of Twilight toward the north. King Solomon ruled them all and made them do his pleasure. These four daughters of the night, the mothers of the demons, and sources of all the vices that degrade and devastate the nature of man, were described as follows: Lilith is ignorance, the mortal foe of childhood and of all instruction. Naama is false pleasure, the mortal foe of all self-discipline, the demon-mother of the wide-spread shame and horrible misery caused by every form of drink and impurity. Agrath is she who fills the world with foul fiction and every form of corrupting literature. Mahalath is the

mortal foe of pure religion and undefiled, the demon-mother of superstition and pharisaism, and of every form of false religion. The offspring of these demon-mothers meet on the dark and dreary mountains and go to the far north—that is, to the region of death and ruin. But Solomon can subdue them and make them serve his will. Canon Farrar says that Christianity with the help of God's grace can overcome these daughters of the night; can expel the curse of Lilith, or Ignorance, by a large and loving Christian education; it can make Naama, or Pleasure, the handmaid not of pollution, but of innocence and noble self-control; it can make Agrath, Literature and Art, the minister to purity and holiness; it can purge Mahalath, or False Religion, from formalism and hollowness and help her to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit which grow on the tree of life in the Paradise of God. It can destroy the offspring of night and fill the world with the "children of the day."

But there is another view in regard to night, and upon that path I wish to lead our thoughts at this time. The purpose of the

night is as benevolent and loving on the part of God as that of the day. I think it will do us good to study the treasures of the night. David found that "Night unto night showeth knowledge." And I think we shall find that to be true.

I

Night recalls us to *a keen sense of the individuality of our own souls, and their responsibility to God.* In these days more than ever we live in a crowd. In the rush and stress of life, when the street is full of noise, and the telephone-bell rings in your ear, or messengers call you here and there, it is easy to forget the solemn responsibility which is on you for your own personality. We come to feel that somehow we are a part of the town, a part of a class, a part of civilization, and we count ourselves in with the great crowd; but night singles us out from the crowd, and in that is a great blessing. Cecil Wright well says that a place in life must be kept for intervals of quiet, stolen from the noise of life, otherwise

spirituality can not thrive. For spiritual things to be real a man must live in the midst of them. We grow skeptical of the existence of that which does not touch us. It is a well-known fact that by excessive devotion to one subject we lose the power to appreciate another. Charles Darwin once wrote: "Up to the age of thirty all poetry gave me pleasure; Shakespeare was my delight; painting also, and music. Now for some years past I can not endure reading a line of poetry; Shakespeare bores and disgusts me; I have lost my taste for painting and for music." The explanation was that the great naturalist had concentrated himself completely on the earth-worm and the monkey. With lifelong persistency he gave his heart and brain to certain studies. His every faculty was absorbed and his every power riveted on those studies. And all the while the poetic faculties of the man were becoming more and more atrophied, benumbed, blunted. He had no quarrel with Shakespeare, or Beethoven, but all unwittingly he had closed the door against them. It is so still. Men are so absorbed in the narrow and noisy present that they

blink when you talk to them of the other world. None of us appreciate how much the night with its power to recall us to our individuality and our personal responsibility to God saves us from being still more terribly influenced by the secular and material influences which so absorb the busy hours of the day. The sad side of it is that such multitudes turn the night into day for sensual and giddy pleasure even more distracting than the hours of business. But he or she is wise who permits the voice of the night to speak of the deeper things of the soul.

II

The night is rich in teaching *the lesson of our dependence upon God.* If man could work on forever, or a limited forever, without recuperation, he would become utterly indifferent to the fact that he gets all his strength from God. In prosperity men often become proud and self-sufficient, and are only brought to wisdom and humility and proper thoughts of God by disasters which reveal to them their own weakness and re-

call them to a sense of dependence upon God for all the blessings of life. Horace Bushnell, in his book on the "Moral Uses of Dark Things," brings out very strikingly this lesson in regard to night and sleep. He shows that if a man were always fresh and strong, incapable of exhaustion as the spring of a watch, moral ideas would seldom get near enough to be felt. But after twelve or sixteen hours the man who rose in the morning full of might, as if a young eternity were in him, begins to flag; his nervous energy is spent; his limbs are heavy; his motions want spirit and precision. If he tries, for some particular reason, to hold on over whole days, his hands grow weaker, his eyelids more heavy, till, at length, he is obliged to resign himself to his fate, and drops, a merely unconscious lump, on the couch of the sleeper. Every day this lesson of frailty is given him. The grass which is cut down by the mower's scythe does not sooner wither and dry up than the strength of the mower himself. We take our very capacity thus in little loans of only a few hours, and when the time has gone, night calls us back into God's

bosom again to be recruited. It is strange that the miracle of every night does not reclaim men from sin altogether, but were it not for this wise and morally beautiful arrangement men would become like devils.

The philosopher reasons that having only this short run of power, we are humbled to a softer key. We do not feel or act as we should if we could rush on our way and have our sin as a law of ceaseless momentum for the whole period of our life. We are like an engine that is started off on the track by itself; the fuel and water will soon be exhausted, and then it must stop. But if it could go on without fuel and water, it would whirl itself across a continent and pitch itself into the sea. So, if, being loose in evil, we could rush interminably on, never to be spent or recruited by night or sleep, our bad momentum would itself drive us to eternal ruin. In our self-will we should be hard beyond conception; our very ambitions and purposes would fly, bullet-wise, at their mark; consideration, conciliation, candor, patience, would all be driven out of the world by the remorseless persistency of our habit. We have great rea-

son to thank God that it is not so. Night intervenes every few hours and brings us to nothingness, saving us from becoming demons, and keeping us men and women that have to go to sleep as children do. In this way we are softened and gentled in feeling. Night makes it impossible that we shall not sometimes be tender. Reason will sometimes get a chance to speak. God's Spirit will have His opportunity of whispering to the soul. The tremendous passion for gain, bad as it is, would be infinitely worse if it were not that the spell it works is broken every few hours by the counter-spell of night and sleep. God has set the sun and the moon and the stars running as a mill against that dangerous worldliness which drowns men in perdition. He buries the world in darkness that we may not see it. He takes the soul off into a world of unconsciousness to break up its bad enchantment. He palsies the hand to make it let go, palsies even the brain to stifle its infatuation.

In the same way God seeks to stifle jealousy and envy and hatred, and to destroy every wicked passion. If it were not for

this, our malignities would burn us up. But night comes on like the truce of God. No hatred burns in the sleeping man who is given over to the spell of night. "No revenge or jealousy lowers on his face in that soft hour of oblivion. If he went to bed heated by an ugly conversation, if he was severe and bitter in his judgments, if all charities were scorched away by his fierce denunciations, he will rise in the morning cool and sweet, and the gentle cheer of his voice will show that he is clear of his bad mood and likes to have it known. A man must be next to a devil who wakes angry. So it is that God is seeking by the blest ministries of the night to soften our hearts, to curb our evil passions, to give us a chance to think concerning the deeper things of life, to show us Himself, and awaken within us sorrow for sin, desire for goodness, and prayer for divine help. So the night comes to be a minister who preaches you a sermon every twenty-four hours—a sermon more solemn and majestic and splendid than any that I can preach to you. God forbid that these daily sermons should all pass unheeded and fail in their holy purpose!

III

The night is *typical of death, which closes our earthly life.* "Night is the shepherd, which brings all things home." Scattered through the day—the father at his work in the shop, or the office, or the mill; the children at school, or in various places of toil—night is the shepherd which brings them all home. So that other night which men call Death is the shepherd that shall bring all of us home. As night falls, and the day's work must be left with its record made up, which it is too late to change, so with the nightfall of death our life-record must go before the Judge of all the earth. There is no magic power in the night that will change the record of our day's work, and there is no magic power in death to change the record of our lives. Robert Buchanan wrote a poem which he called the "Ballad of Judas Iscariot." I do not agree, of course, with the implication of after-death repentance which might be found in the poem, but the thought of the poet is this: Judas, the poor broken victim of his own sin, by which he sought to profit through

the betrayal of his Master, wanders in the darkness through the desert waste of eternity, till, seeing but one light, he draws toward that.

The Bridegroom shaded his eyes and looked,
And his face was bright to see;
"What dost thou here at the Lord's Supper,
With thy body's sins?" said He.

'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Stood black and sad and bare;
"I have wandered many nights and days;
There is no light elsewhere"

. . . . . .

'Twas the Bridegroom stood at the open door,
And beckoned, smiling sweet;
'Twas the soul of Judas Iscariot
Stole in, and fell at His feet.
The supper wine is poured at last,
The lights burn bright and fair,
Iscariot washes the Bridegroom's feet,
And dries them with his hair.

My dear friends, we shall never escape from God by leaping into the arms of death. There is no power in death to cleanse our sins or to change an impure heart. There is no light anywhere but in Jesus Christ that welcomes a sinful soul. And so, while the

day lasts, ere the night of death cometh, I call you to Christ, the Savior of sinners, who will welcome you with tenderness and forgiveness. You need not delay to try in some way to make yourself better; the power and the mercy and the love are all in Jesus. You can only come, saying humbly:

O Savior, I have naught to plead
On earth beneath or heaven above
But just my own exceeding need,
And Thine exceeding love.

LIGHT AND SHADOW

"And the evening and the morning were the first day."—Gen. 1:5.

You will notice that in our text, describing the evolution of the day, evening comes before morning. The day begins with the night. This is just the opposite of our usual method of recording history. When we tell the story of any historical event, we are likely to begin with the morning and end with the evening. Dr. L. W. Bacon says that history, as told in literature, is a tragedy, and ends with a death. So human history is ever looking backward; and the morning and the evening make the day. But it is not so that God writes history. The annals of mankind in the Bible begin in the darkness of apostasy, but the darkness is shot through with gleams of hope, the first rays of the dawn. The sentence of death is illuminated with the promise of a Savior. There is night again when the flood comes down, and the civilization and

the wickedness of the primeval world are whelmed beneath it. But the flood clears off with a rainbow, and it is proved to have been the clearing of the earth for a better progress, for the rearing of a godly race, of whom by and by the Christ shall come according to the flesh. In all our thinking we should follow God's order. We do so in our thoughts about the physical day.

We recognize that a restful night prepares for vigorous work in the day to follow. This ought to suggest to us that the night of sickness or sorrow, or adversity of any kind, is often a preparation for a better and a nobler epoch of success. There could be no greater blunder than for us to imagine that the dark times in human life are an indication that God has forgotten us, or that He is angry with us, or are in any sense a punishment for what is past. Instead, we may be sure that to them that love God times of darkness are always meant as a discipline and preparation for what is coming in the future. They are the evening before the day. There are many such experiences in every life—times when all that we can do is to sit still and wait; trying

experiences, when a man's business is heavy and stagnant, or meets strong currents of opposition; times of sickness, and depression; times of grief and doubt and sorrow. These are the even-times of life; and at such times we are not to look back and try to remember how much brighter it was in some other epoch of the past, but to look forward toward the dawn of the morning. It is folly in such an experience to say, "What have I done, that this sorrow or trial should come upon me?" What we ought to say is, "What is God preparing for me, and for what is He preparing me, that He should thus lovingly chasten and instruct me in this night of trial?" It is not the night after the day that you are in; it is the night before the day; and if with faithful heart you seek to learn God's purpose, and humbly submit yourself to His hand, the bright day shall dawn upon you in a glory of grander joy and happiness than you have ever known.

We may find a beautiful illustration of this great truth in the crucifixion of Jesus. When Christ died upon the cross, men said, "It is the end." His disciples forsook Him

and fled. But it was not the end. It was not the evening after Christ's day, it was the evening before. Easter morning was soon to come, and fill the world with the glory of immortal hope.

Any of you who are in sorrow should get the comfort of our theme. You should learn that it takes both light and shadow, both evening and morning, to make the day of our human life. The shadows are as necessary as the light. Clouds are as important as sunshine. A land of perpetual sunshine, where the clouds never softened its glare, and the skies never wept in sympathetic tears upon the thirsty fields, would be an unfruitful desert. Great fertility can only come with clouds and storms as well as sunshine and heat. So, great fruitfulness and sweetness of character, which make a man or a woman like an orchard tree hanging full of juicy blessings for all who come in contact with it, are only possible where the shadows have fallen as well as the light. If I speak to any over whom the clouds hang darkly, who is passing through an epoch which is dark with shadow, let me comfort your soul with the great truth that

the clouds are as much God's messengers as the sunshine, that the evening as well as the morning is a part of God's benevolent and loving purpose. In the Gospel record we are told that on the Mount of Transfiguration, when Christ was transfigured before His disciples, after they had seen the glory of their Lord, a cloud overshadowed them, and it is written: "They feared as they entered the cloud." Matthew tells us that it was a "bright cloud," and this was true in more senses than one. Its brightness was not only external, but spiritual also, for "out of the cloud there came a voice," which brought to them a wealth of blessing and inner light. We read that when they first saw the glory Peter said: "Let us make three tabernacles," but it is added, "not knowing what he said." In the ecstasy of the vision the human voice was heard, a voice of folly; in the shadow of the cloud, it was the voice of God; and it would seem from the after-records of Peter and James and John that nothing made a greater impression on them amid all the glories of the scene than the voice which spoke to them in the midst of the cloud that they had feared to enter.

It is often so with us; many of us, to hear the voice of God, have to enter into the cloud and the darkness of the evening. When all is bright and sunny we are apt to be filled with the joy of our own emotion, and to speak out of the enthusiasm and exuberance of our own spirits; but when the evening of trial and sorrow and misfortune comes upon us, and we feel our own helplessness and need, we become conscious of our dependence upon God, and we bow our hearts and open our ears to catch the words that come to us from heaven. Many men have heard messages in the midnight to which they were deaf at high noon. Despair not because it is evening, for the morning cometh!

There is room here for an earnest word of warning. Some of you are enjoying the sunshine of a great and beautiful prosperity. Your health is strong, your business is profitable, your friends are kind, and heaven seems to smile upon you. I would not say one word to darken or lessen your joy, but I would utter a word of wisdom given me from God's truth and speaking out of our theme at this time, and that is, that for you as well as others the sunshine will not always be for

the best. You should not permit the prosperity and the happiness which you now enjoy to make you proud, or indifferent to spiritual things, or stubborn in seeking to have your own way. You should remember that all these things come to you from God, and that humility and gratitude are your proper attitude in the sunshine of your life. For you, too, clouds will come. You, too, will know the darkness of tears, the agony of heartache, and the strain of burden-bearing. Your life would be barren if this were not so. Do not enjoy your day the less because of this, but seek through humility and gratitude and sympathy and fruitfulness of life to make day a preparation for night and darkness. Both for the light and the shadows of life trustfulness in the divine love is our one source of peace. Some unknown poet brings this out in a song which, characterizing many epochs of Christian experience, finds that trust in Jesus fits one as well as another. He sings:

Trust in Jesus, *trembling* Christian,
  Strength you need beyond your own;
Trust not in your feeble efforts,
  He can help, and He alone.

Trust in Jesus, *doubting* Christian,
Has He ever failed you yet?
Is there not for you a promise,
"Yet will I not thee forget"?

Trust in Jesus, *weary* Christian,
Work He asks not now of you;
'Neath His shadow sweetly resting
You shall taste His love anew.

Trust in Jesus, *suffering* Christian,
Well He knows your every pain;
He who bled on Calvary's mountain
Suffers in His child again!

Trust in Jesus, *needy* Christian,
Tell Him all your wants in prayer;
"Cruse" and "barrel" shall not fail you,
Since He makes them both His care.

Trust in Jesus, *working* Christian,
Sow not with a sparing hand;
Crops, when comes the day of reaping,
Will spring forth at His command!

Trust in Jesus, *wealthy* Christian,
Use for Him His gift of gold;
Know that what you lend to Jesus,
He'll repay in gain untold!

Trust in Jesus all who know Him;
None can teach and guide as He;
Prove Him, and you'll find how precious
Such a Friend will always be!

But there are some of you to whom these trustful words of divine faith do not bring comfort, for there is upon your conscience a weight of guilt and sin. You have refused the divine love. God has spoken to you by His Spirit in the quiet hours of the night; He has spoken to you through the preaching of His word; He has spoken to you through the tender love of Christian friends; but you have refused to respond, and in sinning against light and knowledge you have brought darkness to your own heart. The way is dark before you at this moment. Sin always brings darkness. Sin is darkness. The sinning soul can never be permanently happy. The sinning soul is never happy except in forgetfulness. And the darkness which comes from sin grows darker and darker until the blackness of eternal night settles down upon the soul. But I thank God that, tho the darkness of sin hangs over your heart, I have for you a message of light

and mercy that may pierce the darkness which envelops you and give the promise of the dawn of a glorious day. Jesus Christ has risen above the world as the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His beams. In Christ is the light of hope. In Him is the light of forgiveness. In Him is the light of freedom from sin, and deliverance from the bondage of dark and sinful habits. It is dark everywhere else, but at the cross, where Christ died for our sins, heaven's light of mercy always falls. Come to Calvary and you shall find light for your heart and light for your path.

My brother, thou hast traveled far,
'Twixt purple East and golden West?
The Southern Cross and Polar Star
Have brightened o'er thy transient rest;
Thy way has led o'er land and sea,
But hast thou been to Calvary?

Perchance thy daring feet have trod
Some Alpine, Himalayan peak;
Or Sinai, whence the living God
Of old His fiery law did speak;
Such scenes have cast their spell on thee,
But hast thou been to Calvary?

It may be thou hast traced the course
Of rolling rivers deep and wide,
Or viewed the cascade's thundering force
Far plashing down the mountain side;
But hast thou turned aside to see
The streams that flow from Calvary?

Thine eyes have scanned the starry night
Where days their equal courses run,
Or lingered with a strange delight
O'er visions of the midnight sun;
But hast thou seen hell's darkness flee,
And heaven beam forth on Calvary?

THE ATMOSPHERE OF LIFE

"And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament."—Gen. 1:7.

BETWEEN the waters above and the waters below we have the atmosphere which surrounds the earth and makes human life possible. The word "atmosphere" is a compound of two Greek words, one meaning "vapor" and the other "sphere"; when taken together, they signify a sphere of vapor in which the world is wrapt. The wisest among the ancients looked upon the air much as little children do now. They thought it was nothing. A child seeing a vessel filled only with air would be likely to say that it had nothing in it. The old expression, "as light as air," which we so frequently use, is a very erroneous phrase used to describe nothingness. Scientists tell us that the mere breathing of the air yields us three-quarters of all our nourishment, while the other quarter only is supplied by the solid and liquid food which we partake. It has well been

said that we can truly say of the atmosphere what the Apostle Paul, and the old Greek poet before him, whom he quoted, said of God, "In it we live and move and have our being." The weight of the atmosphere is so great that its pressure upon a man of ordinary size has been computed to be from fourteen to fifteen tons. A man of unusually large body would have to carry one or two tons additional. But as the pressure of the atmosphere comes against us equally upon all sides and parts of the body, it not only does not crush or injure the frailest child, but feeds and nourishes it.

Few of us give the matter sufficient thought to arouse the gratitude we owe to God for the blessings of the atmosphere. One scholar, writing upon this point, says that the atmosphere is the great agent by which Nature receives the wonderful colors which are her most beautiful adorning. It is owing to the reflection of the sun's rays that the sky and the distant horizon assume that beautiful azure hue which is subject to endless variations. It is owing to the refraction of these rays as they pass obliquely through the aerial strata that we have the splendors of

the morning and evening twilight, and that we see the sun some minutes before it actually rises above the eastern horizon, and again several minutes after it actually disappears below the western horizon. If it were not for the atmosphere, the light would instantaneously disappear as the sun sank below the horizon, and leave the world in utter darkness, while at its rising in the morning the world would pass in an instant from complete darkness into a flood of dazzling and blinding light. Such daily and sudden shocks to vision would be painful, and probably destructive to sight. Without the atmosphere there would have been no place in the universe for the dwelling-place of man, because without it the waters would have prevailed. But as by the atmosphere the waters below were divided from those above, a place was provided suitable for the abode of man. Without the air, which gathers the moisture into clouds and sends it down again upon the earth, there could be no such thing as rain or snow. Without the atmosphere there could be no purifying winds, which are but air in motion, no medium to transmit and diffuse the light

and heat of the sun, no agent to modify and make surpassingly beautiful the light of the sun, and no possibility of respiration for plants or animals, without which it would be impossible to maintain any form of organic life.

The atmosphere, too, is indispensable for all the practical purposes of life. If by some miraculous intervention it should be made possible for human life to exist without the air, it would be useless and vain. The air is necessary for the transmission of sound. Without it, the bell might be tolled, the cannon might be fired, a great chorus of sweet voices might unite to render the music of the noblest hymn, but not the faintest sound would be audible either to the performers or to the listeners. You might breathe or even loudly speak your words of love into the very ear of some dear one, and yet not one of your words would be heard without the presence of air in the ear to empower its wondrous mechanism for hearing. As light is necessary for seeing, so in exactly the same way is the air necessary for hearing, and without it the ear would be perfectly useless, instead of

being, as now, a wonderful organ to minister to our joy and delight. And since without the atmosphere we could not hear each other speak, it follows that all commercial, educational, and social intercourse would be at an end, and the earth would become one vast grave.

The physical atmosphere should be rich in spiritual suggestions concerning the atmosphere of the soul.

I

The kind of atmosphere in any country dictates the quality of physical life which may be produced there. Many flowers and plants will grow in one atmosphere but not in another. Many men and women who live comfortably and happily in a rare atmosphere in some lofty tableland or mountain region could not perpetuate their lives in a low heavy atmosphere near the sea. Thus, the atmosphere becomes the best of medicine and abounds in healing balm. The same is true in spiritual things. There is such a thing as a spiritual atmosphere in which

the mind and heart and soul of man thrives and grows powerful. That is one of the characteristics of the Bible. It is not only the wonderful message which the Bible brings to us that makes it the most powerful book in the world, but it is a certain spiritual atmosphere which pervades it from beginning to end. No man can read the Bible without having his thoughts continually running out after God. God is in the world. He is in the history of the world. He has spoken to men. He does speak to men. He loves mankind. He seeks their good. The heart of the universe is kind. Providence is loving. No man can read the Bible without feeling these things. It is an atmosphere which he breathes. And that fact makes sincere and habitual reading of the Bible one of the greatest sources of high and noble living.

Public worship, with its reading of the Bible, its singing of worshipful hymns voicing the soul's loftiest adoration and love for God, with the preaching of the message of heaven's love and power and willingness to forgive sins, creates an atmosphere which tremendously affects the thoughts and

ideals and ambitions and conduct of the people who regularly attend the church of God. A habit of regular church-going is one of the most important for any man or woman who desires to live a noble life, because of the atmosphere of faith and hope and love which is breathed there.

A famous Japanese general, asked how he accounted for the wonderful vitality, bravery, and enthusiasm of the Japanese soldiers as contrasted with the Russian soldiers, said he believed it was mainly due to their mental and spiritual attitude. He said the Russian soldier, as a rule, was in a discouraged and pessimistic state of mind. He had no hope either here or hereafter. Should he live to return to his home, nothing but humdrum and trial awaited him. He had no love for his life or for his country, and he had little hope for a future life. His earthly prospect, as well as his religious faith, was of a dull and hopeless character. On the other hand, the Japanese soldier loves his country and home life. He is sustained through the fatigue of the march and the dangers of the battlefield by fond anticipation of his return home. In case he

is killed fighting for his country, according to his religion, nothing but the brightest prospects are before him. He simply becomes a part of the ministering host of other spirits, helping to cheer on his remaining comrades to victory.

Hope is the religion of life and health. The man or the woman who is inspired by hope will grudge no labor, no care, no severity of strain or hardship. They will survive when others fail, will wax strong when others languish. So it is that the public and private worship of God, in which we take hold of the divine aid and feel that God is with us and for us, creates an atmosphere of hope that will overcome all opposition.

II

These reflections should impress upon our minds and hearts the necessity of being very careful about the atmosphere into which we thrust our spiritual natures. The soul may be poisoned as well as the body.

In Nathaniel Hawthorne's remarkable story, "Rappaccini's Daughter," he describes

a chemist who, in the study of poisons, had a garden full of lovely but poisonous flowers, to whose breath, in a fiendish experiment, he exposed for years his beautiful daughter. The girl became so impregnated with the poison that her own breath was deadly to any living thing. That is a true picture of those who breathe a selfish and impure atmosphere. They are not only poisoned by it, but they become themselves poisonous in their turn.

Beware of evil associations which create an atmosphere that intoxicates and drugs the soul with fumes that come from the pit. The aroused feeling in our own city at this moment because of the relation of a public-school building to certain streets along which little children and youth would have to go daily, is in point. Thoughtful people, knowing that the moral atmosphere of these streets is impure and unclean, and likely to poison the minds and hearts of youth now innocent, seek to save them from the dangerous contamination. That is wise and right. But our message should come to those who are masters of themselves and may choose their own atmosphere for

their souls. There is nothing so important to young men or young women in coming into a city as to place themselves by their acquaintance and social surroundings where the atmosphere they breathe from the friendly conversations of their daily lives shall be pure and wholesome. A young man may live in this city and breathe constantly an atmosphere that is rare and true. He may grow strong on its fragrance of hope and love and faith. At the same time another young man coming to the city from the same country town or farming community may place himself in such surroundings and with such friends that he will breathe the very atmosphere of hell, until his whole soul and life is poisoned by it.

It is the glory of Christianity that wherever it prevails it creates a purer atmosphere for the growth of human hearts and lives. And what is true of the civilization which it develops in a multitude, is true of every individual man or woman who gives himself or herself up to follow Christ. Even tho' you have followed sin until an atmosphere of hopelessness and despair surrounds your soul, yet if you will come to Christ

humbly and reverently, He will take you out of that atmosphere of darkness and gloom and lift you into an atmosphere full of sunshine and hope. Perhaps that transformation was never more splendidly described than by David when he says: "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praises unto our God."

APPEAL OF THE SKY

"God called the firmament heaven."—Gen. 1:8.

THE sky is treated with most beautiful poetic imagery in the Bible. In the Book of Proverbs, where wisdom speaks as tho incarnated, we hear her saying: "When he prepared the heavens, I was there: When he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above." Isaiah, speaking of the sky as part of God's creation which He made and can again destroy, says: "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree." And again, in his description of the might and glory of God, Isaiah says: "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." In the Book of Job,

also: "Is not God in the heights of heaven? And behold the height of the stars how high they are! And thou sayest, how doth God know? Can he judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven." Again, the writer of the same book, contrasting man's littleness with God's greatness, inquires: "Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking-glass?" And the Psalmist, calling on all things to praise God, exclaims: "Praise ye him, sun and moon: Praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heaven of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens."

This poetical language has sometimes been criticized as not being scientifically correct, but that is a very cheap criticism. It is not scientifically correct to say there is a "sunrise," or that we have seen a "sunset," but every scientific man in the world uses these phrases. There are many things in the world in description of which poetry is more correct than science.

The moral and spiritual teaching of the

sky should be very helpful. It is so abundant that one can only glance at some of the supreme messages it is always bringing to us.

I

The sky suggests the soul's true direction —it is upward. Every man who is true to himself, and who seeks the proper development of his body and mind and heart, aspires constantly to higher things. The very phrase "higher things," which I used quite unconsciously, suggests the great fact that we are always using the idea of altitude to denote the difference between good and evil. All the figures, all the adjectives which describe that which is pure and righteous and noble and heroic, are those that indicate altitude. How constantly we are saying, "exalted worth," or "high resolve," or "lofty ambitions," or "elevated purposes," or "eminent purity," or "sublime character." It is impossible to think of things which are beautiful and noble and glorious without this idea of exaltation; something lifted upward toward the sky. On the other

hand, we never speak of evil in that way. If a thing is mean and ugly and wicked, we think of it as beneath. We speak of a very mean, depraved person as "beneath contempt," and we are constantly using expressions of that sort, such as "low instincts," or "degraded character," or "groveling habits." And how frequently in speaking of some man who has been guilty of conduct quite unworthy of his reputation and ordinary life, we say of it, "Such an act was beneath him; he should not have stooped so low as to do it."

From these illustrations it is evident that the sky is a perpetual appeal to us, calling man upward, showing that he was not made to grovel in the dirt, but to soar aloft in his thoughts and ambitions toward heaven.

II

The sky lifts our thoughts to God. Everything that comes from the sky is pure and wholesome. The floods of sunshine that come with their illuminating beams, the white snow that comes as a mantle of righteousness, the rain that has been filtered and

purified in the lofty cloud centers, all are pure. Beneath us there may be swamps full of malaria. There may be pestilential breaths from a thousand diseased centers of man's filth, and ignorance, and sin; but from the sky nothing impure falls upon us. So our thoughts are lifted up to the sky as the fountain of purity and goodness. A man looks into the sky, whether it holds clouds full of pure rain-drops, or white snow-flakes, or is a blue vault full of infinite mystery at noontide, or sparkling with jeweled stars at midnight, and it shames his sin and his meanness and calls him to account in the court of his own conscience. The vaulted sky is a perpetual appeal to us for a true life, for a holy character, and a perpetual rebuke to sin and meanness.

III

The sky vaulted over our heads, and coming down to our view at the horizon, suggests to us that heaven is forever stooping down to lift men upward. Man left to himself falls into evil ways and grovels like a vine upon the earth. A man born into

the world innocent and pure, as is every little child, may lose all that innocence and purity if his face be turned from the sky and he refuses to yield to its magnetic appeal.

Many of you have heard of the young artist who painted on one occasion a picture of innocence. It was the picture of a little child, so fair, so sweet, so sunny, that it seemed to the artist, with the bright and ardent visions of youth, as if it had come straight from the hand of God. He was successful in his work, and he hung the picture on the wall of his studio and would not part with it; he grew so fond of it himself, this fair picture of innocence. Long years passed, and it still hung in his studio. When he grew older he wanted to paint a companion picture for it, a picture which he could call "Vice." But he never could see anything which fitted in with his idea of the horror and repulsiveness of guilt in all its odiousness, until at last one day, in a gloomy cell in a city prison, he came across a wretched criminal on whose coarse features were written every mark which sin and vice could write, claiming this wretch for their own.

He asked and obtained permission to transfer these coarsened features to his canvas, to make a companion picture to his picture of innocence; and what was his amazement when in course of conversation with his subject he discovered that this was the man who, as a child, had sat as his study of innocence. Years of groveling in sin had wrought their inevitable change, and had brought about this awful ruin. Sin will always work this evil transformation. But, thank God! heaven's sky bends over us "like as a father pitieth his children," "as a mother comforteth her child," and Jesus Christ comes down from heaven to earth, God's messenger to lead us upward.

George Frederick Watts, a great Christian artist, has in the Tate Gallery in London a beautiful picture entitled "Love and Life." Life is represented as a frail, timid, diffident maiden climbing up a steep and almost inaccessible mountain. Love comes to her rescue and help in the guise of a young angel, strong in limb and wing, and unspeakably tender in hand and face. Behind the maiden is a deep abyss, and one wonders how she climbed out of it. Before her is

a lofty mountain with steep ascent, and one wonders how, in her own unaided strength, she can ever scale it. Her face appeals in wistful trustfulness to her athletic supporter, his face reassures her of helpfulness, but he does not attempt to carry her or put his arm around her, or even take hers in his. He only permits her to place her hand in his open palm. He will see her up the steep ascent, but he is not going to deprive her of the joy and exaltation of effort and exertion. Watts intended to preach a sermon in this picture. The frail, impotent woman is meant to represent sinful humanity, while the painter himself has told us that his was the Pauline conception of Love, who spoke of the love of God constraining him. There is no finer gospel sermon than this picture. Life a steep, rugged mountain, man weak and sinful and helpless, divine Love coming down the mountain to meet him, responding to his appealing look with strong tenderness. The poor sinner in trustful faith placing his hand in the open palm of God, and God leading him up the rough, narrow path till he reaches the summit in triumph and glad-

ness. The mountain is so steep that it is evident Life can do nothing without Love, but the angel is so strong that it is evident Life can do everything with Love. The two faces are a rich study, the shrinking timidity and yet appealing trustfulness in the face of Life, while there is such a strong tenderness in the face of Love that it seems as tho we were looking into the eyes of Him who was nailed to the cross for us.

Our theme, and this illustration of it, should appeal to all our hearts, and should come with special emphasis to you who have hitherto disregarded the infinite tenderness of God in Jesus Christ in bowing the heavens and coming down in seeking your salvation. In Jesus Christ the sky stoops down to lift men out of their sins into fellowship with Heaven. Jesus is the hand of divine Love offered to man in his hour of need and sin, and if we place our hand in His open palm, He will not fail or forsake us until the mountain-top is reached. How tender are the words and the figures used in the Bible to convey to us the infinite love and sympathy and patience of Jesus Christ. "A bruised reed he will not break, and the

smoking flax he will not quench." Oh, brother, sister, has life gone hard with you? Is your heart heavy and sore with trouble? Does it seem to you in your discouragement that you are like a broken reed? Christ will take you in His arms as tenderly as ever mother brooded over her helpless babe. Again it is said of Jesus, "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end." No man shall ever sorrow because Jesus was unfaithful or deserted the heart that trusted Him in the hour of need. Everything else may change, but Christ is the same "yesterday, to-day, and forever." Paul, who had more trials than most men, who had been shipwrecked, and beaten with rods, stoned until he was left for dead, and imprisoned through weary years, after it all was able to say with joyous confidence: "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

THE BIRTH OF INDIVIDUALITY

"And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together in one place, and let the dry land appear: And it was so."—Gen. 1:9.

OUR text brings us to the birth of individuality in the story of creation. Up to this point in this condensed biography of the universe we have been dealing with the world in a mass—a great seething, heaving mass. It is all alike. It is vast and awe-inspiring, but it is monotonous. Now God's purpose begins to express itself in individual shapes and forms. Diversity is introduced. Things begin to differ from each other, and have characteristics of their own. The waters begin to recede, and the gaunt, huge mountains peer forth into the atmosphere and thrust their summits upward into the newly formed sky. Individualism now takes its place. Each mountain and cañon and valley and tableland has topography and story of its very own. The world now begins to take on added interest.

I

We should learn from this the importance of individuality in our human lives. It is a sin to try to make people all on the same cut-and-dried plan. Much of the interest of humanity lies in the diversity of gift and power. There is much in our modern civilization which tends to force men and women into the same mold, and make everybody simply an ape of somebody else.

There is a picture which has attracted a great deal of attention recently on the continent of Europe, which has given a very painful impression to many people who have studied it. The picture represents a youth in the very flower of his age grasped by a monster whose arms seem like walls of iron all around him. The youth is helpless in the grasp of the giant, and is bowing his head in a sort of resigned despair. It is useless to struggle! Men have felt the truth of that picture. There is a truth in it. There is much in our modern civilization that presses on life. There are influences laid upon us all, the effect of which is to obstruct the free development of our indi-

viduality and to squeeze out of us that divine gift of personality which makes one person different from another. We should seek in dealing with children and youth coming under our guidance, and in the development of our own natures, to give freedom to the original bent and talent with which God has endowed the human soul.

II

We should see the interest which belongs to youth that has as yet untried possibilities in it. The new lands are interesting not because of what they are, but because of their promise. Dawson, the scientist, referring to the statement in connection with this text that "God saw that it was good," comments that to our view that primeval dry land would scarcely have seemed good. It was a world of bare, rocky peaks and verdureless valleys—here active volcanoes, with their heaps of scoria and scarcely cooled lava currents, there vast mud flats, recently upheaved from the bottom of the waters, nowhere even a blade of grass, or a

clinging lichen. Yet it was good in the view of its Maker, who could see it in relation to the uses for which He had made it, and as a fit preparatory step to the new wonders He was soon to introduce. The opportunity to live and work out God's purpose in us in the world is a priceless privilege. Every youth should realize that he is a separate individual study and creation of Almighty God, intended to fulfil a mission among men, to do work which in some high and noble sense, which we can not fully understand, no one else will ever be able to do—work which if he fails to do must remain undone forever. The violet is a very delicate little blossom, but how distinctly poorer the world would be in flowers if it refused to bloom. The song thrush is a little bird, but if it ceased to sing the woods would be perceptibly impoverished of song. So God has given to each one of us some power to wake music that is needed in the great orchestra of human life, and every one of us who fails to do our work at the very best in some way mars the divine harmony. To every human heart there is given the spiritual soil out of which

there may come a blossom of spiritual beauty having a fragrance all its own, and if our hearts are so closed to the wooing of the heavenly sunshine that they do not bloom or yield their fragrance, we are robbing God and mankind. We talk about the fear of death. Life is much more a thing to stand in awe of. Let us stand before each day of life with that enthusiasm and romantic feeling which belong to new discovery and opportunities to do great things that shall be of blessing to the world. The worst thing that can happen to us is to have these ever budding opportunities with the dawn of every day, and yet fail to accomplish what with God's help we could accomplish. A wasted life is the most terrible outlook of which any man can dream. The poet truly says:

Men think it is an awful sight
To see a soul just set adrift
On that drear voyage from whose night
The ominous shadows never lift;
But 'tis more awful to behold
A helpless infant newly born,
Whose little hands unconscious hold
The keys of darkness and of morn.

Mine held them once: I flung away
  Those keys that might have open set
The golden sluices of the day,
  But clutch the keys of darkness yet;
I hear the reapers singing go
  Into God's harvest: I, that might
With them have chosen, here below
  Grope shuddering at the gates of night.

O glorious youth, that once was mine!
  O high ideal! all in vain
Ye enter at this ruined shrine
  Whence worship ne'er shall rise again;
The bat and owl inhabit here,
  The snake nests in the altar-stone,
The sacred vessels molder near,
  The image of the God is gone.

III

We should learn that everything is possible in beauty and usefulness where there is God and a fresh soil. There is here on this bleak new land neither grass nor trees, but given a soil, and God to brood over it, and there are grassy hillsides, and daisies and buttercups, and fragrant lilies, with violets nestling in the shadows, and wild strawberries blushing in the sun. Here are only

bleak mountain sides, and dark, desolate cañons, but with God to brood over them there are soon evergreen forests of pine and fir and cedar and hemlock and spruce, and foothills covered with oak, and dark damp places adorned with cottonwood and ash and willow. At the heart of the cañons there are streams of water which ever and anon flash into waterfalls. These gather themselves together as they near the valleys, and a river pours forth through the plains. Let us learn the great lesson of all this. Poverty —that is, lack of money, lack of friends, lack of knowledge of the world, lack of accumulation—is nothing if there is the fresh, open mind, the open sincere heart over which God may brood and find complete surrender to follow His guidance and do His bidding. A young man or woman may stand at the gate of life as poor as Abraham Lincoln in the backwoods of Illinois. There may not seem to be much opportunity for influence or power to bless the world, but if, as in Lincoln's case, there is an open mind and a heart sensitive to God's call to duty, then all things are possible. God is always able to make any man or woman a

towering blessing to the world if he or she is completely obedient to Him. He can take a man with as little brains as Uncle John Vassar and make him of greater blessing to the world than a hundred intellectual giants living at the same time, if he be completely surrendered to Him. It is God and the mountain, it is God and the valley, that produce forest and field and meadow.

Dr. Watkinson, in one of his recent sermons, declares that all that is great in our spiritual life, as in our intellectual life, is of God's free grace to a soul open to receive it, and he comments on the fact that people do not like a gift. It is the last thing anybody will acknowledge. You do not like a gift. If you can get up a testimonial for a man, you fancy you are giving him something, but a man has a great deal of sophistry inside him on occasions, that explains that a gift is not a gift. He says, "I am glad that they have found my merit out at last; they have been a long time about it, but I take it as a recognition of my merit." So you do not like a gift, and the natural man does not like the free grace

of God. "No," you say, "there is not anything exactly like that in nature." But there is. Did Milton work himself up to that music of his? Did Shakespeare, by the slavery of his study of dramatic units, become a great dramatist? Did Gainsborough become a great painter by drudgery? I am not saying they did not work and toil, but I am saying that over and above all their work there was the free grace of God in genius, and what we call genius in the intellectual world is what we call free grace in the spiritual world. Shakespeare, Milton, Turner, Lincoln, and a hundred others the world will never forget, were given great powers of God. They dared to write, and to paint, and to lift on humanity's burdens out of the strength God gave them, and so they wrought for all time. My friends, the secret of great spiritual blessing and power is right here. Dare to trust God. Surrender your heart and life completely to Him, and God will wonderfully glorify and beautify your nature. Flowers shall bloom in your soul, and all about you shall call you blest. It is pitiful when we think how little we are compared to what we ought to be when we

take into consideration our opportunities and traditions. We who were born of parents whose ancestors have been Christians for generations! We with the blood of missionaries and Christian heroes in our veins! How pitiful that we with all this Christian heritage, and who have been so well taught in Sunday-school and church, with our minds illuminated with so much of the gospel truth, should have so little spiritual vitality, so little spiritual fire wherewith to warm the world. All that is necessary is that we should here and now hold ourselves completely surrendered to the free grace of God, that the heavenly fire may ignite and cause to break forth into blaze the gospel truth with which we are already charged. I was living in New York City at the time of the burning of a great hotel. The clerk in the office said he looked to the end of the corridor, seventy-five feet away, and fire was breaking out there. He turned to put his books in the safe, and noticed that in the rear of the building, fifty feet distant, fire appeared also. And there was evidence that on the floor above, at another end of the hotel, flames were bursting out at the same

time. The only plausible explanation was that the installation of the electric wires had given out all over the building; short circuits at many separate points had resulted; an unusual charge of electricity from the power-house had kindled a dozen fires at once. My friends, our whole being in mind and heart is wired for the heavenly electricity. The prayers we learned to say at mother's knee, the Christian hymns we learned to sing before we could talk plainly, the promises of God's Word stored up in our minds in our very babyhood, all the teachings and influence of Sunday-school and church, of sermons and prayers all our lives, have been wiring our whole personality for the conduct of divine influence. All that is wanting is that that inner power of our individuality, our power of response and choice, shall look up to God and cry:

Oh, that in me the sacred fire
Might now begin to glow,

Oh, that it now from heaven might fall,
And all my sins consume!
Come, Holy Ghost, for Thee I call;
Spirit of burning, come!

THE SEA AND ITS SAILORS

"The gathering together of the waters called he seas."—Gen. 1:10.

She who wrote the popular song, "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep," wrote with perhaps greater wisdom than she knew, for the sea is God's cradle for humanity. The whole world is rocked in safety and abundance and comfort on the lap of the sea. The sea is the storehouse of the world—a storehouse which is inexhaustible and which no famine or drought can ever strike. Few people appreciate what a vast concourse of life is going on in the sea. It is said that the life in the sea far exceeds all that is outside of it. There are nearly thirty thousand species of living beings in the sea which are known to man. A very large part of the food of the world is taken out of the sea direct. In Norway four hundred million of a single species have been taken in one season; in Sweden, seven hundred millions, and so all around the globe all people go

to the sea for a very large proportion of their food.

The sea is the power-house of the world—for it is not the rivers which keep the sea going; it is the sea which keeps the rivers going. All the water in our mountain streams, as well as in our great rivers, comes from the sea. They are entirely supplied by the vapor always rising from the ocean, which is carried by the winds over the tops of the mountains, where in God's great condensers it is distilled and falls in snow or rain upon the summits of the high hills. So it is not the rivers that fill the sea, but the sea that fills the rivers. Some inland farmer, two thousand miles from the ocean, relying on his irrigation ditch filled at the mountain stream, may think that he is independent of the sea; but he is not, for every drop of the precious, life-giving fluid which gives verdure to his pastures, richness to his meadows, and apples to his orchards, is the gift of the sea, and would be impossible without it. So it is the sea that turns all the mill-wheels, and drives all the looms and locomotives throughout the land.

It is the sea that controls the temperature of the world. It does it just like a modern hot-water plant in one of our great homes or business buildings. It sends the hot water up into the skies, lets it condense and come back again down through the streams, so moderating the temperature of the earth. The sea is the basement of the world, the proper place for a hot-water plant, and its currents in still other ways determine climate. A warm current sweeping through the ocean can change what would otherwise be a frigid zone into temperate or tropical fertility. If it were not for this modifying influence of the sea, human life could never have been maintained on the earth.

The health of the world depends upon the sea. The decay and death which is going on in all parts of the world would make it a pest-house in a very brief time, full of pestilence that would destroy all animal life, if it were not that the sea is ceaselessly at work purifying the atmosphere and sending wholesome breezes across the land. Without the sea there could be no drainage. The ocean receives the sewage of the globe, and extracts its poison, and

purifies it so that the winds which would otherwise be the messengers of death become the ministers of mercy and the very breath of life.

The sea is the highway of the world. It is covered by innumerable roads. Take a great marine map and you will be astonished to note the ship-trails that are marked on it. We talk about the trackless sea, but it has plainly marked routes over which ships come and go with their rich cargoes and their richer freightage of human life almost with the regularity of a city ferry. Instead of being a barrier between the nations, the sea is a great highway which brings them closer together. And in our day the commerce of the world is having a very large share in the civilization of mankind. The common needs of men are coming to be recognized rapidly through the agency of the sea, which breaks down all barriers between the nations.

So it is that there is not a spot on the globe, high or low, that does not receive some blessing from the sea. What a wonderful illustration of the sleepless providence of God, who created the earth and the sea,

and has made this world the home of mankind, and is forever looking after His child and causing all things to work together for his good. Some poet sings of God as the Great Weaver, with the world for His loom. He says:

See the mystic Weaver sitting
High in heaven, His loom below.
Up and down the treadles go;
Takes, for webs, the world's dark ages,
Takes the nobles and their pages.
Takes all stations and all stages.

Thrones are bobbins in His shuttle,
Armies make them scud and scuttle—
Web into the woof must flow
Up and down the nations go!
At the *Weaver's* will they go!

Calmly see the mystic Weaver
Throw His shuttle to and fro;
'Mid the noise and wild confusion,
Well the Weaver seems to know
What each motion and commotion,
What each fusion, and confusion,
In the grand result will show:

Glorious wonder! What a weaving!
To the dull beyond believing.
Such no fabled ages know,
Only faith can see the mystery,
How, along the isles of history,
Where the feet of sages go,
Loveliest to the fairest eyes,
Grand the mystic tapet lies:
Soft and smooth and every spreading,
As if made for angel's treading—
Tufted circles touching ever;
Every figure has its plaidings,
Brighter forms and softer shadings,
Each illumined—what a riddle—
From a cross that gems the middle.

'Tis a saying—some reject it—
That its light is all reflected;
That the tapet lines are given
By a sun that shines in heaven:
'Tis believed—by all believing—
That great God Himself is weaving,
Bringing out the world's dark mystery,
In the light of faith and history;
And, as web and wool diminish,
Comes the grand and glorious finish,
When begin the golden ages,
Long foretold by seers and sages.

I

We can not study the sea without having suggested to us that stirring figure which we use so often, in which human life is compared to a voyage, and our destiny becomes the port toward which we are sailing. Job, in his day of trial, speaking of the rapid passing of human life, declared that his days up to that time had "passed away as the swift ships." The writer of the Book of Proverbs, in his graphic and wonderful picture of a wise woman and her resources for blessing others, says, "She is like the merchants' ships." We are all voyagers, sailing toward the future. We carry different cargoes, and sail under different flags, and the port we have in view and our hopes concerning it differ widely indeed. We often look at men and women who are strangers to us and wonder whither they are sailing, what spiritual cargo they carry, and to what haven their souls aspire. Wordsworth has painted a very striking picture of thoughts that rose in his mind on seeing a ship start forth on its voyage:

With ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh
Like stars in heaven, and joyously it showed;
Some lying fast at anchor in the road,
Some veering up and down, one knew not why,
A goodly Vessel did I then espy
Come like a giant from a haven broad;
And lustily along the bay she strode,
Her tackling rich, and of apparel high.
This Ship was naught to me, nor I to her,
Yet I pursued her with a Lover's look;
This Ship to all the rest I did prefer:
When will she turn, and whither? She will brook
No tarrying: where she comes the wind must stir;
On went she, and due north her journey took.

Where lies the land to which yon Ship must go?
Fresh as a lark mounting at break of day
Festively she puts forth in trim array;
Is she for tropic suns; or polar snow?
What boots the inquiry?—Neither friend nor foe
She cares for; let her travel where she may
She finds familiar friends, a beaten way
Ever before her, and a wind to blow.
Yet still I ask, what haven is her mark?
And, almost as it was when ships were rare
(From time to time, like Pilgrims, here and there
Crossing the waters), doubt, and something dark,
Of the old Sea some reverential fear
Is with me at thy farewell, joyous Bark!

Our discussion will be of little avail unless it awakens in our hearts earnest questionings in regard to our own voyage of life. Whither are we sailing? Who stands as the captain at the wheel of our life-ship? To what haven do we carry papers and cargo? It is our most precious privilege to have Christ in the ship with us. In such a case we may be sure that no storm can overcome us. Once when Christ was on earth He was in the ship with His friends, and when the storm arose and they were greatly frightened and besought His interest, He spoke peace to the waves, and they marveled that the very winds and the sea obeyed Him. Is Christ with you in the ship? If He is not, He is not far away and, if you will call for Him, He will answer. On one occasion, when the friends of Christ were on the sea at night, and a great storm came up that threatened them with shipwreck, Jesus was watching from the land, and when He saw their danger He came walking across the waves, and when He drew near they were frightened, and thought they saw His ghost, and they cried out that it was a spirit, but Jesus said to them: "Lo! it is I; be not

afraid." And He came into the vessel, and at His word the storm was calmed, and they soon came to the land in peace. I doubt not I speak to some of you now who are in the midst of the storm. With you, as with those early disciples, the winds are contrary. The night is dark, the waves of trouble run high about your ship. It seems to you as tho shipwreck of your fondest hopes and plans were certain. Oh, my friend, across the sea of your troubles, of your sorrows, yes, even of your sins, Christ comes walking to-night, and He is saying to you through the message of His Word, "Lo! it is I; be not afraid."

Let us ask again whither are we sailing and what haven beyond the grave do we hope to enter? Henry Van Dyke, in his beautiful little book, "Ships and Havens," declares that the passion of immortality is the thing that immortalizes our being. To be in love with heaven is the surest way to be fitted for it. Desire is the magnetic force of character. Character is the compass of life. Let us put this question very simply to the depth of the soul as tho it was put to each man and woman among us.

What is your desired haven beyond the grave? It is for you to choose. There are no secret books of fate in which your course is traced and your destiny irrevocably appointed. There is only the Lamb's book of life, in which new names are being written every day, as new hearts turn from darkness to light and from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God. No ship that sails the sea is as free to make for her port as you are to seek the haven that your inmost soul desires. And if your choice is right, if your desire is real, so that you will steer and strive with God's help to reach the goal, you shall never be wrecked or lost, and it shall be said of you as of those of whom the psalmist speaks, "So he bringeth them unto their desired haven." Longfellow sings:

Like unto ships far off at sea,
Outward or homeward bound, are we.
Before, behind, and all around,
Floats and swings the horizon's bound,
Seems at its distant rim to rise
And climb the crystal wall of the skies,
And then again to turn and sink
As if we could slide from its outer brink.

Ah! it is not the sea,
It is not the sea that sinks and shelves,
But ourselves
That rock and rise
With endless and uneasy motion,
Now touching the very skies,
Now sinking into the depths of ocean.
Ah! if our souls but poise and swing
Like the compass in its brazen ring,
Ever level and ever true
To the toil and the task we have to do,
We shall sail securely, and safely reach
The Fortunate Isles, on whose shining beach
The sights we see, and the sounds we hear,
Will be those of joy and not of fear.

THE ROMANCE OF THE FIELDS

"And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in himself, after his kind, and God saw that it was good."—Gen. 1:12.

We are at an interesting point in the biography of the world. The days of chaos have long passed. The waters have gathered themselves together in the basement of the globe and formed the great seas. Mountains have been heaved into the sky, and deep cañons and long slopes and new-born rivers add picturesqueness and grandeur to the topography of the world. But yet it is a dead world, for there is no life upon which the eye and the heart may fasten. But God's purposes are now taking shape, and grass is sprouting in the valleys and on the hillsides, and the barren earth is turning green in the sun. Daisies, like summer snowflakes, mingle with buttercups, yellow as the sun from which they draw their gold. Lilies spring up in the low

lands, and gorgeous poppies fill the valleys with glory. Trees are leaving forth in the ravines, and the whole world from the brink of the sea to the top of the mountain is being beautified and glorified by grass and flowering plants and growing trees and delicate mosses.

I

Our theme can not help but suggest to us God's love for beauty. He has not only clothed the world, but in ten thousand ways He has made it beautiful. It would have been possible to have created fertile soil and fruit-bearing plants without beauty. But God loves beauty, and this love of beauty blushes in the cheek of the strawberry and the apple, whitens in the cotton field, grows crimson in the autumn leaves, and dazzlingly glorious in the sunset. We should learn from this that if God cares so much about beauty, and is so careful in the creation of the most common things to clothe them with beauty, we should not only do the things that are necessary, should not only

hold ourselves responsible to be just and honest, but we should hold ourselves under bonds to be honest and just in a beautiful way. It is not enough that we are good; we must be good beautifully and graciously. If God cares so much about beauty that He makes the heart of the maple-tree, hidden away in the depths of the forest, more beautiful in its grain than any skilled human workman can approach; if God cares enough about beauty to cover the ugly rocks in the mountain solitudes with delicate mosses; to fill the skies with cloud-pictures, the despair of the artist; to make the harvest fields of toil green and white and golden in their loveliness; to make the winter world spotless as an angel's wing; to make the dying world of autumn magnificent beyond description; to make the midnight sky like a vestibule to heaven; to make every morning sunrise and every evening's sunset like a hallelujah chorus of angels; if beauty means as much as this to God, how dare we imagine for a moment that it is not important in His sight that we should be careful that our lives are clothed with beauty? Some one sings this truth most inspiringly:

The grace of friendship, mind and heart
  Linked with their fellow heart and mind;
The gains of science, gifts of art;
  The sense of oneness with our kind;
The thirst to know and understand—
  A large and liberal discontent;
These are the goods in life's rich hand,
  The things that are more excellent.

In faultless rhythm the ocean rolls,
  A rapturous silence thrills the skies;
And on this earth are lovely souls,
  That softly look with aidful eyes
Tho dark, O God, Thy course and track,
  I think Thou must at least have meant
That nought which lives should wholly lack
  The things that are more excellent.

II

God links beauty with service. The world is so beautiful that sometimes people are led to think most of that, as tho that was the only thing God had in mind; but in all beauty God has a thought of service. The grass that covers the hillsides and the meadows, the grain which springs up in the fields, and the trees growing in the forest are all beautiful, but they are the more beautiful

since they also serve. No human life can be long beautiful without service, and service rendered with highest motive is sure to become beautiful. I was reading recently the story of Elizabeth Frye. It was when she was a thoughtless girl of seventeen years, used to all the refinement of luxury and a life of ease, that God came to her through the voice of a Quaker preacher. She consecrated her life to God. It became her very meat and drink to do the will of Christ. When she was sixty-five years of age she wrote: "Since my heart was touched, at the age of seventeen, I believe I have never awakened from sleep, in sickness or in health, by day or by night, without my first waking thought being how best I might serve my Lord." Such a life could not help but become beautiful. God sent her among the outcast, and her life became a constant benediction. The work she began in Great Britain among female convicts spread all over the continent of Europe. Letters from crowned heads, as well as from philanthropic people in the common walks of life, began to pour in, inviting her to visit the prisons of other lands; and subsequently she visited Scotland,

France, Germany, and other countries upon this errand of mercy, everywhere hailed as an angel of peace and good will to men. She was changed from a thoughtless, frivolous girl into a woman of great usefulness and power, whose life was given permanent beauty because she gave herself unstintedly to service. Such opportunities as came to Elizabeth Frye may not come to us, but we can live in the same spirit of willingness to serve Christ and our fellowmen, and if we do so, the same beauty of character will come to us. Some one sings:

I may not reach the heights I seek,
My untried strength may fail me;
Or, half-way up the mountain peak,
Fierce tempests may assail me.
But tho that place I never gain,
Herein lies comfort for my pain—
I will be worthy of it.

I may not triumph in success,
Despite my earnest labor,
I may not grasp results that bless
The efforts of my neighbor,
But tho that goal I never see,
This thought shall always dwell with me—
I will be worthy of it.

The golden glory of love's light
  May never fall upon my way.
My path may lead through shadowed night,
  Like some deserted byway.
But tho life's dearest joy I miss,
There lies a nameless strength in this—
    I will be worthy of it.

III

Here is the birth of the law of heredity. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," is a doctrine born on these first fields planted by the hand of God. As the man who sows oats does not expect to reap thistles, and the man who sows thorns need not hope to reap wheat; so in mental and spiritual things everything yields after its kind. It is true of our thoughts. Some people imagine their mind is like a wild, untamed steed that can not be bridled or harnessed, and that what we think is of no moment. But there can be no greater folly than that. The Bible assumes that we have the power to control our thinking. Dr. Ossian Davies says that our thoughts are as truly under our control as are our arms

or feet or hands. Man is able to concentrate his thoughts, and this habit of continuous attention and control of our thinking lies at the root of all mental and moral progress. How does the young apprentice learn his trade? By sowing certain thoughts which grow and multiply along the line of his business. How does the student become a ripe scholar? By carefully taking care of the thoughts which he allows seeding-place in the soil of his mind. A wholesome man who takes his will seriously is as able to regulate his mind as the engineer is to regulate his machinery. It is reported that Wesley and Wellington and Napoleon could go to sleep at any moment of the day or night, by sheer force of mental resolution. And are we not commanded in the Bible to think on things lovely, and honest, and true, and just, and pure? Nothing could be more important than that. Be careful of the plants you sow in your mind, for it is nowhere truer than there that every seed shall bring forth after his kind.

The teachings of John Ruskin are pervaded all the way through by the poetry of the Psalms. How does it come? As soon

as he was able to read he studied the Bible by his mother's side as few children were ever taught to study its pages. Among the passages that he learned by heart were the twenty-third, thirty-second, ninetieth, ninety-first, one hundred and third, one hundred and twelfth, one hundred and nineteenth, and one hundred and thirty ninth Psalm. Of the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm Ruskin once said: "It is strange that of all the pieces of the Bible which my mother taught me, that which cost me most to learn, and which was to my childish mind chiefly repulsive, Psalm one hundred and nineteenth, has now become of all the most precious to me in its overflowing and glorious passion for the love of God." Sow the Bible in your heart and it will bear fruit after its kind.

The spiritual world has this same law of heredity. The writer of Proverbs tells us that "A soft answer turneth away wrath," and love generates love again in return.

Mr. Moody used to tell how when he built his first tabernacle in Chicago he was so anxious that every one who came to that tabernacle, whatever else he might

hear or learn, should hear or learn about the love of God, and so fearful was he that some day some man might stand up in the pulpit and forget to tell the people that God is love, that he had these letters raised in gas-jets right over the preacher's head, so whoever preached there, and whatever he preached about, the whole audience during the entire sermon saw that blazing away above his head, "God is love." One night after the church was lit up, and before the service began, and before anybody had come, a poor wretched man was passing up the street, and came up to the tabernacle. He saw the door standing partly ajar; he said to himself, "There will be warmth and comfort inside, anyhow." He went up the steps and pushed the door a little wider open, and was about to step in, when those gas-jets blazing away above the pulpit caught his attention, "God is love." He pulled the door to, turned around and went down the steps, and started up the street grumbling and muttering to himself. He said, "That is not true, God is not love; if God were love, He would love me, and God certainly does not love

such a miserable outcast as I am." But the letters of fire which he had seen kept burning into his heart, "God is love," "God is love," "God is love"; and finally he turned around and retraced his steps and came back to the tabernacle, taking a place in one corner of the audience-room. After a while the congregation came and Mr. Moody began to preach. As Mr. Moody preached, the poor fellow began to weep. Mr. Moody caught sight of the man in tears, and as soon as the sermon was over he walked right out of the pulpit, and went and sat down by the side of the man who was weeping and said to him, "My friend, what was it in the sermon that affected you so?" "Oh," he said, "it was nothing in the sermon, sir; I have not heard a word of the sermon; I do not know what you preached about." "Well," said Mr. Moody, "why are you weeping?" "Oh," he replied, "those words up there in the gas-jets, 'God is love.'" Mr. Moody opened his Bible and from it showed the despairing man the wonderful love of God to sinners, and that man forsook his sin, and taking the great truth into his heart, was saved that night.

My friends, that was only the most natural thing in the world, that God's love should awaken the love of that poor sinner in return. How unnaturally some of you are living. God has manifested His love to you in a hundred ways, and yet you are giving Him no love and no thanksgiving in your daily lives. The soil must respond to the seed, but a man's heart may refuse. God has made you so like Himself that you can refuse response even to the divine love, but, oh, the folly of it, and the tragedy of it! Open your heart to the love of God, and let it be the good soil that shall give back love for love for your Savior and your Lord.

THE CLOCK OF TIME

"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years."—Gen. 1:14.

OUR text is the record of the birth of time. Behind it is eternity, before is eternity; but here time is born. We have recorded the building of the first clock in the universe—the great clock of time. All other clocks have been modeled after it, and all other clocks depend upon it. This is the one perfect clock which God placed in the heavens to tell the hours, the days, the weeks, the months, the seasons, and the years. This is a clock which no one ever winds up, but which has been going on constantly without slipping a single cog or forgetting a stroke since its creation, and has never gone wrong. The dial-plate of this clock is the blue skies over our heads, and what a dial-plate it is! In the daytime it is brilliant with light, and at night it is

set with stars like diamonds. Around the edge of this dial-plate is the rim of the horizon, and it has the sun and the moon for its hands. Both are forever shining as they move, and both keep perfect time and are never early or late.

Bishop Wilberforce well said that there are few words much oftener in our mouths than that short but most important word, time. The thought of it seems to mingle itself with almost everything we do. It is the long measure of our labor, expectation, and pain; it is the scanty measure of our rest and joy. Its shortness or its length are continually given as our reason for doing, or leaving undone, the various works which concern us from time to time. What present time is, it is most difficult to conceive, for even as we try to catch it, tho but in thought, it slips by us. Subdivide our measure as we may, we never actually reach it. It was future, it is past; it is the meeting-point of these two, and itself, it seems, is not. And so the question arises whether there really is any future time; whether it can exist, except in our idea, before it is. Or whether there can be any

past time; what that can be which is no more; whose track of light has vanished from us in the darkness; which is as a shadow that swept by us and is gone. All this is full of wonder, and it may become, in many ways, most useful matter for reflection to those who can bear to look calmly into the depths of their being. It may lead us to remember how much of what is round us here is, after all, seeming and unreal, and so force us from our too ready commerce with visible shadows into communion with invisible realities.

I

Let us learn from this wonderful clock of time, First: Man's supreme place in the universe. Man is greater than his clock, tho it may have the power to crush him if he puts himself in the way of its machinery. This wonderful clock of time was made to serve man. There can be no greater evidence of the truthfulness of the record concerning the story of creation, in which man is put in possession of the world, the whole teaching of which is that the universe

was made to serve man, than the adaptation of this great clock of time to minister to man's needs. A story has often been told of Napoleon, that on one occasion when he was at sea, returning home from Egpyt, he overheard his officers, as they paced the deck on a starlit night, arguing as to the existence of God. That great military genius listened for a moment, and then, throwing his hand out toward the sky, said "Gentlemen, who made all that?" So this clock of time is not only the evidence of the existence of God, but a perpetual evidence of the truthfulness of this story of creation, which places man in the center of the stage as the child of God.

II

The clock of time enables men to reckon their time and mark the flight of their lives. It would be impossible for us to do this without it. Professor Gaussen tells the story of the famous Baron de Trenck, that when he came out of his dark dungeon in Magdeburg, where he could not distinguish night from day, and in which the King of Prussia

had kept him imprisoned for ten years, he imagined that he had been in it for a much shorter period, because he had had no means of marking how the time had passed, and he had seen no new events and had even had few thoughts. His astonishment was extreme when he was told how many years had thus passed away like a painful dream. But this great clock of time makes it impossible for us to forget or be indifferent to the flight of our years. It makes us divide them up and count them off a day at a time. A few minutes before noon every day by the Eastern standard time, every Western Union Telegraph Company's instrument cuts its connection and is put in communication with the instrument in the Naval Observatory in Washington. At five seconds before twelve a warning tick sounds over the wires. When the skilled operator in the observatory sees that the sun is directly over the imaginary line of longitude passing through the city, that moment the fact is flashed over thousands of miles of wire, and every one of the company's clocks made true. Then business is resumed. The work of the day is planned

with reference to this appointment. The company's rule is to be absolutely accurate; to test this accuracy every day, and to test it by the standard set in the heavens, and all this purely for commercial purposes. And all the great cities and towns and little villages and farmhouses throughout the land get their time indirectly if not directly from the sun, the great shining hand on the clock of time. So it is that man's thought is called constantly to the heavens, and it is daily suggested to us that since our lives are so utterly dependent on God, we ought to cut clean our connection with every outside thing at least once in every twenty-four hours, and put our hearts as well as our watches beating in time and tune with the great heart of the universe.

III

By aid of this great clock of time God is ever and anon calling us to an accounting, giving us a premonition of the judgment day under circumstances which impress us and are likely to call us to wisdom. Every evening's sunset is a little miniature judg-

ment. The day is done. What has been accomplished by it? It calls men to thought and to consideration. Every morning's sunrise is an appeal for a better life. No matter how I may have failed yesterday, with the dawn of the morning hope springs in my heart to make a better record to-day. Susan Coolidge very aptly expresses it when she sings:

> Every day is a fresh beginning,
> Every morn is the world made new;
> You who are weary of sorrow and sinning,
> Here is a beautiful hope for you—
> A hope for me and a hope for you.

Not only the days, but the close of every week again calls us to a halt. One of the great blessings of Sunday is that it is a mirror in which we see ourselves once a week and are called to account. The months, too, are marked by mile-stones and are forever emphasizing to us the flight of our opportunities. New Year's day is an annual day of judgment to every thoughtful man or woman. Our birthdays are solemn monitors, telling us of the flight of time and calling us to remember that whatever we are going to do, we should be up and

doing ere our measure of time has flown away.

This constant reckoning which is forced upon us by the clock of time compels us to take account of the relative values of things, and give the more time to the things which are more important. If we had all eternity, if there were no limit, then we could afford to give as much time to a small matter as to a great matter. But when the clock tells us that the time is passing, and that there can be but a short measure left, we are given wisdom to devote ourselves to matters that really count in our destiny. I have read of an artist's pupil who was sketching a landscape bathed in the glow of the setting sun. A large barn stood in the foreground. The artist watched his pupil in silence for a time, and then said to him impressively, "If you spend so much time painting the shingles on that barn, you will never have time to paint that sunset." In all our work we must choose between shingles and sunsets. If we would win the things that are great and glorious and splendid, we must give scant attention to the things that are of small account.

IV

This great solemn clock of time, which counts our lives so persistently day by day, calls us to serious and wise views of life. President Hadley, of Yale University, in an address to college students, recently said, "We think of life as a goblet to be drained; is it not rather a measure to be filled?" A wise reviewer of that statement declares that the whole difference between a wasted life and a successful one is in that short sentence. The world forever needs, forever values, the men who fill life with value for themselves and others. "What can I get out of it?" is the worst, and, in the end, the most hopeless motto a man can have. Life, if we get ourselves to drain it, is a pitifully shallow cup. It holds a few pleasures, which are often bitter in the after-taste, a little selfish ambition, but no more. All down the line of history pleasure-lovers, who have taken life to be a goblet to be drained, have found the bitter dregs at the bottom of the cup.

But the men who have taken life to be a measure to be filled with the best thinking and the best doing they could pour into it—they are the pride and the glory of history. The biography of every great man like Gladstone, or Lincoln, or Barnardo, or Moody, or General Booth, teaches us how much the measure of life may be made to hold. Study lives like those and it is not a shallow cup. Life is shallow only when we are seeking to exhaust it; it enlarges as we seek to fill it. And the end of such a life is honor and peace. When that heroic man, Bishop Charles C. McCabe, drew near the end, he wrote a friend, a few weeks before the stroke of paralysis ended his toil on earth, of a bad break he had had in his health. He closed the letter by saying that the recent days of weakness and sleepless nights had brought to his mind a little poem found under the pillow of a dead soldier in Port Royal in 1862:

I lay me down to sleep
And little care
Whether my waking find me
Here or there.

I am not eager—bold;
All that is past.
I'm ready *not to do*
At last—at last.

My *full* day's work is done
And that is all my part,
I give a patient God
My patient heart—

And grasp His banner still
Tho all the stars be dim—
For stripes no less than stars
Lead up to Him.

THE LAMPS OF THE SKY

"God made the two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also."—Gen. 1:16.

WHAT great words these are and with what great themes they deal! Instinctively the mind and heart are lifted up and exalted. David says, "When I consider thy heavens, and the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained," then he is led off into great thoughts concerning God and man and his eternal destiny. Job says the same thing in his own grand way, "Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God." And when God answered Job out of the whirlwind He silenced him with the inquiry: "Where is the way to the dwelling-place of light? And as for darkness, where is the place thereof, that thou shouldest take it with a bound thereof, and that thou shouldest discern the paths to the house thereof? * * * * Canst thou bind the clusters of the Pleiades or loose

the bands of Orion? Canst thou lead forth the signs of the Zodiac in their season? Or canst thou guide the Bear with her train? Knowest thou the ordinances of the heavens? Canst thou establish the dominion thereof in the earth?"

And again David says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork." But David does not undertake to teach astronomy. The Bible does not profess to be a book of science. It is the Book of God. It is to reveal to men the presence of God in His world, and the Bible calls attention to the heavens, to the sun and the moon and the stars, as the witnesses of God's power and wisdom as well as the revelation of His benevolence and love.

To the reverent soul the stars in their courses and the moon in all her phases are lessons repeated every night of the thoughtful care of God toward His children. That this heavenly witness of the majesty and love of God is silent, only puts terrible emphasis upon its testimony, for in all the great things silence is the law of the universe. The heavens are also universal

teachers from pole to pole, o'ershadowing all nations and all peoples, the heavens bear their testimony and speak their message. "Two things," said Kant, "fill the soul with awe and wonder; the starry heaven above and the moral law within." As the moon and the stars speak to us by night and the sun by day, calling us to note and consider our relation with the highest heaven, so there is something in us to which the infinite God can speak. Pascal said, "Man is a worm; but then, he is a worm that thinks." Men may look to be very low and insignificant to us sometimes, but the scene changes when you reflect concerning the humblest man that he has relations with the infinite God who ordained the heavens and who is able to speak to this man in his inner soul and make him comprehend the meaning of such words as "Trust," "Duty," "Obedience," and "Religion."

I am sure that it will be instructive and helpful to us to briefly consider some of the messages which come to us from these lamps in the sky.

I

Stanford Holme, after a visit to the Midnight Sun, declared that of all the forms of idolatry none is less unreasonable than the worship of the sun. For if ever man might seem to be excusable in mistaking the creature for the Creator; if ever the eye of man might be dazzled and blinded by the glory of any created thing, so as not clearly to distinguish it from the glory of the Creator, it is when he looks upon the sun in the heavens. And of all the seekers after God amid the gloom of heathenism, none ever come nearer finding Him without the aid of revelation than one of the old Norsemen, a supreme judge of Iceland in the time of the Republic; a man of unblemished life and integrity, who vowed that he would worship no other god but Him who had created the sun, and who was more mighty than either Thor or Odin. And, when dying, he desired to be carried out under the open heaven that he might pray the Father of Lights to deliver his soul in the darkness of death. And if indeed "The invisible things of God may be under-

stood by the things that are made"; and if "every one that asketh receiveth and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened," who shall dare say that the prayer of this old Norseman was not heard and answered.

Many years ago a tactful minister of the Gospel named Livingstone and Louis Bonaparte, ex-King of Holland, happened to be fellow passengers on board a Hudson River steamer. As the minister was walking the deck in the morning, and gazing at the refulgence of the rising sun, which appeared to him unusually attractive, he passed near the distinguished stranger, and, stopping for a moment, accosted him thus: "How glorious, sir, is that object," pointing gracefully with his hand to the sun. The ex-king assenting, he immediately added, "And how much more glorious, sir, must be its Maker, the Sun of Righteousness." A gentleman who overheard this brief conversation, being acquainted with both men, now introduced them to each other, and a few more remarks were interchanged. Shortly after, the minister again turned to the king, and, with an air of kindly fellowship, invited

him first, and then the rest of the company, to attend a morning prayer. After the conversation that had passed, it seemed the most natural thing in the world to accept the invitation.

There is no more beautiful nor comprehensive illustration or type of Jesus Christ than when He is compared to the sun. The prophet Malachi, looking into the future, beheld the coming of Jesus and cried: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings."

Dr. McCosh, a famous college professor and moral philosopher of his day, tells how he once climbed the Gorner Grat, in the Alps, to see the sun rise. It is one of the great sights of the world. Every mountain catches the light according to the height which the upheaving forces that God set in motion have given it. First, the point of Monte Rosa is kissed by the morning beams, blushes for a moment, and forthwith stands clear in the light. Then the Bretthorn, and the dome of Mischabel, and the Matterhorn, and twenty other grand mountains, embracing the distant Jung Frau, receive each in

its turn the gladdening rays, bask each for a brief space, and then remain bathed in sunlight. Meanwhile the valleys between lie down dark and dismal as death. But the light which has risen is the light of the morning; and the shadows constantly lessen, and it is not long before they all vanish. Such is the hopeful view which believers in Jesus Christ may take of the world. Already wide reaches are illuminated by the light from Jesus Christ. Great Britain and her spreading colonies; Prussia extending her influence; the Stars and Stripes of the United States traversing the wide ocean to spread the banner of freedom of conscience over the Philippines and other islands of the sea; the establishing of great Christian churches in Japan; the marvelous increase in conversions in China and in India; the awakening of interest and pouring of light and hope into darkest Africa, strengthen our faith and quicken our hope that the time is rapidly coming when the whole world, with all its peoples and tribes, shall behold the beauty and the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

II

The moon has often been used as a type of the Christian Church. It is a striking illustration because of the fact that while the moon gives the same quality of light, tho of a lesser quantity, it shines by reflected light. It has no light in itself. It must get all its light from the sun. So the Church of Jesus Christ on the earth, under whatever local or denominational name it may be called, must get all its heavenly light from the Sun of Righteousness. No other light can take the place of that. We do not depreciate intellectual light, the beauty of learning and scholarship. We do not underrate the beauty and power of art or music or literature; but there is not enough light in all of these combined, apart from Jesus Christ, to pilot a single soul out of the darkness of sin to God and forgiveness. Whenever the Church strays from Christ it loses its power to give true enlightenment to sinful men. And there is the true glory of the Church, to be able to light men to God. The supreme mission of the Church is to light the path of the sinner to the cross of Jesus Christ,

where the light of forgiveness and salvation may be found. When the Church loses that light, she becomes a poor and pitiful thing; she can no longer prove her right to exist. And we are worthy members of the Church of Christ only when as individuals we have so surrendered our hearts to the radiant beams that fall from Christ that we are able to add something to the aggregate light of Christ's Church and illuminate the dark places about us.

But there are some of you who are not a part of the Christian Church, yet who, nevertheless, owe it a debt which you are very likely to overlook. Dr. Gunsaulus, the Chicago preacher, tells an interesting story of Philip D. Armour and Dr. Henry M. Field. Mr. Armour had long admired The New York *Evangelist,* and was distrest when he heard that the decline of the journal threatened to leave Dr. Field, its editor and owner, in penury in his old age. The packer asked Dr. Gunsaulus to invite the editor to Chicago, and then he himself invited them both to dinner in his home. At the table Mr. Armour turned the conversation almost immediately to the editor's

brother, Mr. Cyrus W. Field, inventor of the ocean telegraph. Said Mr. Armour: "I am sorry that in your brother's lifetime I did not recognize more clearly my debt to him. Now every day I sit in my office and communicate with my agents all over the world, and my business multiplies wonderfully just because I can keep in touch with markets for my products in every country. And I owe it all to your brother; if it hadn't been for his faith in the ocean cables I never could have built up such a trade. I keep wishing I had done something while he was living to show him that I appreciated his achievement." The packing king kept the same strain of conversation through most of the meal. Toward the last a plate set down before the editor contained among the viands of the course a small slip of folded paper. Dr. Field opened it doubtfully and found written within: "Good for ten thousand dollars at the office of the Armour Packing Company to the brother of Cyrus W. Field." The venerable editor was overwhelmed with confusion and was scarcely able to express his feeling. But, of course, as his host had

calculated, he could not decline a gift given in his brother's memory, and the order was cashed next morning.

I have recalled the incident because there seems to me to be in this sense of indebtedness which Mr. Armour felt toward the great inventor of the ocean telegraph a realization of obligation which ought to be more keenly felt by every man and woman here who is living a moral and to a degree an upright life without any acknowledged help to Christianity. You owe to the Church of Christ a debt which you have never recognized. Indeed, you may sometimes say, as have others, that it is only the weak man who is unable to live an upright and true life without the aid of Jesus Christ. Ah! my friend, with what a poor grace come such words or such thoughts from you, who all your lifetime have lived within range of the light that falls from the windows of the Christian Church; who from the time you were little children until now have been, whether consciously or not, held back from evil ways and inspired to good deeds through the light that has fallen upon your path and upon your heart from Christian sources.

Do not, I beg of you, live longer this life of ingratitude. It is unworthy of you. Pay the debt you owe to Jesus Christ. Surrender your whole life and heart to Him and allow Him to illuminate all your soul with His glorious presence.

III

The stars are used in the Scriptures as an illustration of the light of individual characters and careers. Paul, in his wonderful and oft-quoted discussion of the resurrection of the dead, says: "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory." There are two thoughts here that we ought to impress upon our minds and upon our hearts as well. First, we have our individuality. All stars are not alike. And each star must get its light from Christ. We should not find fault with one another because we do not shine in exactly the same degree. Not only so, but no one can take our place. In some mysterious and tremendous sense it must be true that if we do not do our work, it never

can be done. There must be some place unlighted unless we give ourselves to the best of our ability to shine for Christ.

The other thought is this, that the possibility of being a light-bearer to the world belongs by inheritance to every one of us. That means that it is possible for each of us in a peculiar and sensible degree to make the world a brighter, a happier, a more glorious place in which to live. We have natures with so much of heaven in them that notwithstanding all our meanness and our sin, if we will humbly submit them to God, the light that was in Jesus Christ can seize hold upon that wick of the heavenly nature in us, and light it, and feed it, so that it will shine forth like a star in the community where we live. And how many times I have seen a man whose whole nature seemed dark as midnight because of his drunkenness or his vulgarity or his dishonesty or his heartless selfishness, come under the power of the gospel of Christ, and be so wrought upon by the Holy Spirit that in humility and repentance he surrendered himself at the mercy seat before God, and He found somewhere in the dark chambers of

the soul a wick which He could light, and lo! there flamed forth a lamp of heaven full of beauty and love and showing the graces of the spirit of Christ. My friend, it is the glory of this gospel I bring to you that I may assure you that there is not one of you who has not within you the capacity to be lighted from heaven, so that you may shine as a star in the firmament of Christ's kingdom.

BEAUTY AND BEAST

"God said, Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly," etc.—Gen. 1: 20-25.

WHAT a silent world it was at the opening of the fifth creative epoch! It was a completed world, but without inhabitants. The house was finished, even to its decoration, but there were no tenants. It was an empty world, waiting to be peopled. There were seas, bays, lakes, rivers, and brooks; but there were no fish, nor turtles, nor any living thing to cast up even a shell along the seashore. The mountains lifted their sublime forms into the sky and the great cañons were growing dark with trees, and the river-bottoms beautiful with verdure, and the wide-stretching plains green with their new carpets of grass. Flowering trees and shrubs shed their fragrance over the forests, and multitudes of blossoms made beautiful the meadow-lands in the lower vales; but there was no eye or personality save God and the

angels to rejoice in it. There was not even a bee to gather honey from the flowers. There were no squirrels to play about the roots of the trees, and no birds to make nests in or sing among their branches. There were no cattle on the plains, no wild beasts in the jungle or the forest. It was a silent, sleeping world.

And now God would fit it up for man, and so He speaks and calls into being creatures that are to give happiness to these new children for whom He is making such splendid preparation. "And God said, Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created the great sea-monsters, and every living creature that moveth, wherewith the waters swarm, after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth. And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day. And God said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind, cattle and creep-

ing things, and beasts of the earth after their kind: and it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the ground after its kind: and God saw that it was good."

I

The mystery of life faces us in this theme. For the first time in our study of the childhood of the world we are face to face with living creatures. Scripture agrees with science in representing life as having a physical basis. A generation or two ago scientific men, however, were commonly expecting to soon discover the source of life in material things. No great scientist expects it any longer. Huxley said, "The chasm between the not living and the living the present state of knowledge can not bridge." And Haeckel says, "Most naturalists of our time have given up the attempt to account for the origin of life by natural causes." And so modern learning has been driven back to God and His creative fiat. Milton, in his immortal "Paradise Lost," pictures with

stately but graphic portraiture the wonderful scenes depicted in our text. Speaking of the creation of the living things in the waters he says:

Forthwith the sounds and seas, each creek and bay,
With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals
Of fish that, with their fins, and shining scales,
Glide under the green wave, in sculls that oft
Bank the mid-sea; part single, or with mate,
Graze the seaweed, their pasture, and through groves
Of coral stray; or, sporting with quick glance,
Show to the sun their waved coats, dropt with gold,
Or, in their pearly shells at ease, attend
Moist nutriment; or under rocks their food,
In jointed armor watch: on smooth the seal
And bended dolphins play; part huge of bulk,
Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait,
Tempest the ocean: there leviathan,
Hugest of living creatures, on the deep
Stretch'd like a promontory, sleeps or swims,
And seems a moving land; and at his gills
Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out, a sea.

And turning his eyes upon the living creatures of the upper air, he beholds—

There the eagle and the stork
On cliffs and cedar tops their eyries build.

And as his eye wanders over the primeval

woods both eye and ear awake to the vital transformation.

From branch to branch the smaller birds with song
Solaced the woods, and spread their painted wings
Till even; nor then the solemn nightingale
Ceased warbling, but all night tuned her soft lays;
Others, on silver lakes and rivers, bathed
Their downy breast; the swan, with arched neck,
Between her white wings mantling proudly, rows
Her state with oary feet; yet oft they quit
The dank, and, rising on stiff pennons, tower
The mid aerial sky: others on ground
Walk'd firm; the crested cock, whose clarion sounds
The silent hours; and th' other, whose gay train
Adorns him, color'd with the florid hue
Of rainbows and starry eyes. The waters thus
With fish replenish'd, and the air with fowl,
Evening and morn solemnized the fifth day.

And now the poet turns in his splendid vision to the creation of the living creatures whose home is to be upon the earth itself, and in wonder he sees:

Out of the ground uprose,
As from his lair, the wild beast, where he wons
In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den;
Among the trees in pairs they rose, they walk'd;
The cattle in the fields and meadows green:
Those rare and solitary, these in flocks

Pasturing at once, and in broad herds upsprung.
The grassy clods now calved; now half appear'd
The tawny lion, pawing to get free
His hinder parts, then springs, as broke from bonds,
And rampant shakes his brindled mane; the ounce,
The libbard, and the tiger, as the mole
Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw
In hillocks: the swift stag from underground
Bore up his branching head; scarce from his mold
Behemoth, biggest born of earth, upheaved
His vastness; fleeced the flocks, and bleating rose
As plants: ambiguous between sea and land,
The river-horse, and scaly crocodile.
At once came forth whatever creeps the ground,
Insect or worm: those waved their limber fans
For wings, and smallest lineament exact
In all the liveries deck'd of summer's pride,
With spots of gold and purple, azure and green.

. . . . . .

swarming, next appear'd
The female bee, that feeds her husband drone
Deliciously, and builds her waxen cells
With honey stored: the rest are numberless,
And thou their natures know'st, and gavest them names.

II

This wonderful world God fitted for man, and surely in all this furnishing of living things on earth, in the waters, and in the air, there are many lessons which speak, not

only to our curious minds, but which have a message from our Heavenly Father to our souls as well. Professor Gaussen, the Christian Scientist of Geneva, says that as in the beauteous creations of the vegetable world, and the creatures of the deep, so also among the birds of the air, we have constant testimony of the immanence of God. Watch the smallest bird and you will find the guiding finger of its Creator. Before they have had any experience you will see the little birds undertake and accomplish all the peculiar duties of their being; and accomplish them, too, with a certainty and perfection which no instruction could teach and no experience improve. The tiny sparrow goes through with the whole process of building, laying, hatching, and rearing as successfully the first time as the last. Who taught this little bird of the air, if it were not God? Who leads the young female bird to prepare a nest, untaught and undirected, long before she has need of it? Who instructs each particular species in its own peculiar style of architecture? And when the first egg is brought forth, who teaches her what she must do with it? Or that it

is a thing to be taken care of, that it must be laid and preserved in the nest; and the germ of future life being wrapt in the egg, who teaches its little owner that heat will develop and mature that germ? Who acquaints her with the fact that her own body possesses the precise kind and degree of warmth required? And what is it that holds her so constantly and so long upon the nest, amid light and darkness, storm and sunshine, without the least knowledge or idea as to what the result or fruit of all this toil and self-denial is to mean? Do you say, "Instinct"? What is instinct to the bird or the beast but the teaching of Almighty God to His creatures?

The migration of the birds is also a most wonderful thing. The Scripture says, "The stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming." So fixt are the dates of departing and returning with many tribes of birds that in certain Eastern countries at the present day, almanacs are timed and bargains struck upon the data they supply. Now, who informs them that the day is come for them to

take their leave? Or announces to them that the time is arrived for their return? Without science, without a map, without a compass, without a way-mark, who acquaints them with the direction they are to take? Or measures out for them the length of the journey they have to perform? Who enables them to pursue without confusion their course over pathless oceans, and through the trackless voids of the atmosphere, alike in the daytime and in the night season, and to arrive exactly at the same spot from year to year? To whom shall we ascribe this extraordinary power—to God, or to the little bird? It must be either to one or to the other. It is obvious that the little bird does not possess either the reasoning powers or the geographical acquaintance or the meteorological knowledge which would enable it to either plan or carry out such astonishing enterprises. Indeed, if man could thus steer his voyages over the ocean, he could throw away the compass and the sextant and dispense with his trigonometry and logarithms. Whatever name we may give this mysterious power, we are brought back to the conviction of Sir Isaac Newton,

that all this is done through the immediate influence and guidance of Him in whom all "live and move and have their being," and without whom "not a sparrow falleth to the ground." And in all this there can not help being afforded a sublime comfort to our own hearts. It is impossible for us to believe that the God who has furnished water for the web-foot and sunshine and buoyant air for the wings of birds has forgotten man and will fail to furnish satisfaction for those higher and nobler longings which inspire our souls. It is impossible to believe that the God who guides the little bird across the trackless ocean has not constant thought and care about the children to whom He has revealed His very soul. With William Cullen Bryant we must agree that

> He who, from zone to zone,
> Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
> In the long way that I must tread alone
> Will lead my steps aright.

Jesus Christ often used the most common beasts and birds as illustrations of the divine care and sympathy. To illustrate

His own power and willingness to share with us and help us in all the burdens of life, He called the attention of tired and weary people to the oxen yoked together that they might the more readily draw their loads and said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

And John the Baptist, turning the attention of his own friends and disciples to Jesus as the true Savior, said to them, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." William Blake, in a little poem full not only of sweetest simplicity but of deep spiritual suggestion, sings to the lamb:

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;

Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
  Little Lamb, who made thee?
  Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee;
He is callèd by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb.
We are callèd by His name.
  Little Lamb, God bless thee!
  Little Lamb, God bless thee!

And so, my dear friends, begin where we will, and wander where we may, in all God's universe, we get back to Jesus Christ as the one comfort of our hearts and the one hope of the salvation of our souls. With all my heart's earnestness I point you to Jesus, "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." He bore your sins, and if you will open your heart to Him, His atoning sacrifice will be accepted for you, and your sins shall be blotted out.

MAN CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion."—Genesis 1:26.

AFTER describing the transformation of chaos into continent and sea and sky; into a world of fertility and beauty, peopled with living creatures, John Milton sings of the vacant position still waiting on the earth. He says:

There wanted yet the master-work, the end
Of all yet done; a creature, who, not prone
And brute, as other creatures, but endued
With sanctity of reason, might erect
His stature, and upright, with front serene,
Govern the rest, self-knowing; and from thence
Magnanimous, to correspond with heaven;
But grateful to acknowledge whence his good
Descends; thither, with heart, and voice, and eyes,
Directed in devotion, to adore
And worship God Supreme, who made him chief
Of all His works: therefore the Omnipotent
Eternal Father (for where is not He
Present?) thus to His Son audibly spake:
"Let us make now man in our image, man

In our similitude, and let them rule
Over the fish and fowl of sea and air,
Beast of the field, and over all the earth,
And every creeping thing that creeps the ground."

It must be accepted by the most critical caviler concerning man's childhood to the divine, that he has in one sense at least lived up to the purpose for which the Bible says he was made and is entering upon dominion over the forces of nature. As Dr. Boardman has said, all history is the story of man's entering upon this great commission for which he was created. Civilization is the unfolding of the privileges of the charter which God put in man's hands at the beginning. And wherever civilized man has gone, there he has gained or is gaining dominion over the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the air, and every living thing that moves on the earth, subduing even the earth itself. Man makes the fish feed him, and the sheep clothe him, and the horse and the ox draw and plow for him. He dikes out the ocean, as in Holland; and opens up harbors, as at Port Said; and digs canals, as at Suez and Panama. He builds railroads through the mountains, as at Saint Gothard,

in the Alps, and under rivers like the Hudson at New York. He binds the continents together with electricity and steam. He pours the waters of lakes and rivers across the deserts and makes them blossom like the rose. He drains pestilential swamps and makes gardens out of them. But this is only the outer surface of man's supremacy over nature. He takes the sand under his feet and turns it into lenses, its clay into endless blocks of bricks, its granite into stalwart buildings, its iron into countless shapes for bridges and heaven-reaching constructions. He subsidizes its vegetable products, making its grains feed him, its cottons clothe him, its forests house him, its coals warm him, and its electric currents give him light. See how man takes dominion over the mechanical powers of nature, making the air waft his ships, the water run his mills, the heat move his engines, the electricity bear his messages, turning the very law of gravitation into a force of buoyancy. Surely in our day man, more than ever before, is coming rapidly into dominion over this wonderful home in which God has placed him.

I

Our theme suggests to us the dignity of man above all other created things. As Pulsford says, it shows man's height and depth and breadth and mystery. He did not come from one principle or distinction of the divine nature, but out of all principles. Man is the image of the whole Deity. There is in him a sanctuary for the Father, for the Son, and for the Holy Ghost. Man's creation called for a council in heaven. Note the difference in the expressions concerning the other creative epochs. In the others we read, "And God said, Let there be light," "Let there be a firmament," "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together," "Let the dry land appear," "Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven," "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures," "Let the earth bring forth the living creatures," and it was so. But now, how different! There is a council in heaven, and we read, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

Joseph Parker says that there is no bolder sentence in all human speech than

that which declares that man was made in God's image. He says it takes an infinite liberty with God and is blasphemy if it is not the truth. We have been so accustomed to look at the statement from the human standpoint that we have forgotten how deeply the divine character itself is implicated. If some man were to tell us that all the sign-boards in Italy were painted by Raphael or Michelangelo, it would be to dishonor the great artists. We would resent the suggestion that Beethoven or Handel is the author of all the noise that passes under the name of music. Yet here we come face to face with the statement that God made man in His own likeness. Sometimes we look at men, and that does look like an impossible thing. We look at lying, drunken, selfish men; plotting, scheming, cruel men; foolish, vain, babbling men; prodigal man, wandering in wildernesses in search of the impossible, sneaking in forbidden places with the crouch of the criminal, putting his finger in human blood and musing as to its probable price per gallon—Ah, it seems impossible. When we look at this depraved and marred and dwarfed

kind of manhood, we are ready to cry out: "Is this heaven's lame success in self-reproduction?" It seems enough to ruin any Bible to have such a statement in it. Ah, but that is only on the surface. We must go deeper. When we look at the idiot's leering face and the sensualist's bloated features and the puppet's powdered and painted countenance, we have not seen the real man, the real woman. We pass these poor bankrupts in character as a man passes a church or a cathedral that seems rough and unattractive on the outside and sees not within. The sinful man is greater than his sin. God sees him and loves him in all his shame and ruin. And there is that within him which proves his likeness to God in that he has power when divinely taught and led to throw off all this ugly and repulsive appearance and walk forth in beauty and moral splendor. Some races have been found that seemed very low indeed, like Darwin's Patagonian Indians, whom he thought to be lower even than four-footed beasts, and yet after twenty-five years of missionary work among them, Darwin came back and was glad to call them brothers.

We sometimes see in the slums of the great city men so depraved and vicious that the image of God seems to have been lost. But out of the worst gang that ever infested New York City, after years of skulking thievery, came Jerry McCauley, who became a saint of God, gloriously blest of Him in winning multitudes to righteousness. My friends, we need to tread reverently even among the jungles of humanity, where the weeds are rankest, and the desert desolation most appalling; for in every man there is a buried magnificence, worthy to command reverence and awe. We need to make much of this inner life of the soul. Our physical lives are very frail. A great many of the beasts of the earth and many even among the birds of the air are more tenacious of life, and have a more secure tenure than we. Our glory is in the inner being, where we were made in the likeness of God, and which shall go on living forever. A keeper in the British museum once found pinned to a skeleton which is among the specimens preserved in that institution a poem entitled, "Lines to a Skeleton." Interested and persistent search was long

made for the author, but, tho after a time five hundred dollars was offered, the author was never discovered. These lines set forth with great clearness the superior value of the unseen life over the life of the physical house in which our real life is carried on:

Behold this ruin! 'Twas a skull
Once, of ethereal spirit full;
This narrow cell was life's retreat:
This space was thought's mysterious seat.
What beauteous visions filled this spot,
What dreams of pleasure long forgot,—
Nor hope, nor joy, nor love, nor fear,
Has left one trace of record here.

Beneath this moldering canopy
Once shone the bright and busy eye;
But start not at the dismal void!
If social love that eye employed,
If with no lawless fire it gleamed,
But through the dew of kindness beamed,
That eye shall be forever bright
When stars and sun are sunk in night.

Within this hollow cavern hung
The ready, swift, and tuneful tongue;
If falsehood's honey it disdained,
And where it could not praise was chained;

If bold in virtue's cause it spoke,
Yet gentle concord never broke,—
This silent tongue shall plead for thee
When time unveils eternity.

Say, did these fingers delve the mine,
Or with its envied rubies shine?
To hew the rock or wear the gem
Avails but little now to them;
But if the page of truth they sought,
Or comfort to the mourners brought,
These hands a richer meed shall claim
Than all that wait on wealth of fame.

Avails it whether bare or shod
These feet the paths of duty trod?
If from the halls of ease they fled
To seek affliction's humble shed,
If grandeur's guilty tribe they spurned,
And home to virtue's cot returned,—
These feet with angel's wings shall vie,
And tread the portals of the sky.

II

The supreme evidence of the truthfulness of the statement of our text is in the person of Jesus Christ. Here we have a man who fills to the full the picture outlined here. Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis, in a great

discourse on "The Witness of Nature to God," says that the golden ladder which is set on the rock of the earth finds its summit in the life of Jesus. One of the things that nature and life offer us, in addition to the laws of light and heat and gravity, is a Life, a Man that lived and walked over the hills of Galilee. He unrolled His heart as a flower unrolls its crimson secret. He took the children in His arms and pointed to the angels who guarded them. He touched the rags of a beggar boy and made them seem silken. His tears fell upon the stained hands of an outcast girl and mercy, falling like heaven's dew, washed the little red hand clean. He stood beside the prodigal and whispered, "Made in the image of God." He saw the people, poor, ignorant, marred with sickness, stained with sorrow, and He had compassion toward them, for they were as sheep that had no shepherd. And when the man went down beneath the oppressor's heel, He pointed to the stars and whispered words of hope. He called the Unseen Force that makes for righteousness his Father. Jesus recognized that man was of

infinite worth because the intellect that was little in man answers to the genius that was large in God. Jesus loved the birds and the flowers and the stars because His Father was the artist who made them. Jesus bade us live on this earth in unending happiness because it was the floor of His Father's house, because it was fitted up for God's dear children as no palace is fitted up for a prince's child. When man's tears fell, He whispered that there was a divine hand that would wipe them away. When the youth stumbled and sinned, He urged that there was a divine mercy that would pity and forgive. And when the eyes of the sweet mother, the old hero, or the little child closed in death, He smiled and said, "In my Father's house are many mansions." My friends, it is in Jesus that we see the supreme evidence of our dignity and our glory. And we are invited to become like Him. We are marred and hurt and defaced, but David says, "He restoreth my soul," and John says that the man who gets into his heart the hope of becoming like Christ, "purifieth himself, even as he is pure." You think of entering upon the

Christian life and entering into the Church of Christ and you pause on the threshold timid and afraid. You say to yourself, "I am not good enough to take upon me this great obligation." My friend, for that very reason you should without delay make this great attempt, for it is not alone, not in your own inspiration or in your own strength, that you must go. No, indeed; the same Christ who came and lived among us to show what our manhood could be like, and who died on the cross to redeem us from our sins, says, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." He will walk the way of life with us, and in His strength and fellowship we shall lose our imperfections and grow into His likeness.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

"God planted a garden, eastward, in Eden."—Gen. 2:8.

It is a very interesting and significant fact that traditions of the Garden of Eden have been handed down from generation to generation among nearly all the tribes of men. The scholarly Kalisch says that Paradise is no exclusive feature of the earliest history of the Hebrews; most of the ancient nations have similar narratives about a happy abode, which care does not approach, and which re-echoes with the sounds of the purest bliss. The Greeks believed that at an immense distance, beyond the Pillars of Hercules, on the borders of the earth, were the islands of the blest, the elysium, abounding in every charm of life, and the Garden of the Hesperides, with golden apples, guarded by an ever-watchful serpent. But still more analogous is the legend of the Hindus, that in the sacred mountain Meru, which is perpetually clothed

in the golden rays of the sun, and whose lofty summit reaches into heaven, no sinful man can exist; that it is guarded by dreadful dragons; that it is adorned with many celestial plants and trees, and is watered by four rivers, which thence separate, and flow to the four chief directions. Equally striking is the resemblance in the belief of the Persians, who suppose that a region of bliss and delight, the town Erriene Vedsho or Heden, more beautiful than the whole rest of the world, traversed by a mighty river, was the original abode of the first men before they were tempted by Ahriman, in the shape of a serpent, to partake of the wonderful fruit of the forbidden tree Hom. And the books of the Chinese describe a garden near the gate of heaven where a perpetual zephyr breathes; it is irrigated by abundant springs, the noblest of which is the "Fountain of Life"; and abounds in delightful trees, one of which bears fruits which have the power of preserving and prolonging the existence of man. All these are significant as showing that mankind is of one origin and that the beauty of man's first home, the

bliss of his surrounding, and the tragedy of his expulsion made an ineffaceable mark upon the heart of universal mankind.

I

It will be interesting and profitable for us to note in connection with our present theme the gardens of the Bible in which God is specially present. Our first garden gives us our theme. The name Eden signifies pleasure: and it is certainly true even to this day that the idea of pleasure is inseparable from that of a garden. The farmer may think about his great fields only with reference to hard toil and unromantic business results, but about his garden there is something different. It is not only for food, but for beauty as well. When old Diocletian was invited from his retreat, to resume the royal purple which he had laid down some years before, he exclaimed: "Could you but see those fruits and herbs of mine own raising at Salona, you would never talk to me of empire!"

Bishop Horne says that we must believe that God esteemed the life of man in a

garden the happiest he could give him, or else He would not have placed Adam in that of Eden. The Garden of Eden had, doubtless, all the perfection it could receive from the hands of Him who ordained it to be the mansion of His favorite creature. It was morning with man and the world. As man was made for the contemplation of God here, and for the enjoyment of Him hereafter, we can not imagine that his knowledge would terminate on earth, tho it took its rise there. Like the patriarch's ladder, its foot was on earth, but its top, doubtless, reached to heaven. By it the mind ascended from the creatures to the Creator, and descended from the Creator to the creatures. It was the golden chain which connected matter and spirit, preserving a communication between the two worlds. Whenever the Garden of Eden is mentioned in the Scriptures, it is called "The Garden of God," or "The Garden of the Lord"—expressions which denote the immanence of God in His world and the tender and familiar relation which God seeks to have with His children.

But over this beautiful scene of the world's childhood and man's morning, which

promised a cloudless day, there comes the tragedy of sin and the Eden of bliss becomes a haunting memory to the race. It is a far cry from the Garden of Eden to the Garden of Gethsemane, but they have very intimate relations. The tragedy enacted in the one is the reason for the tragedy of the other, and when we go out into the garden on the Mount of Olives with Jesus and His disciples after they have taken the last supper together, and we see Christ kneeling there alone in the garden, apart from the disciples, and hear His agonizing cry, while the great drops of bloody sweat roll down His brow, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done!" we see the beginning of a tragedy which is to end on the cross of Calvary. And the agony of atonement for sin which we see in the Garden of Gethsemane has to do with the tragedy of sin of which we learn in this Garden of Eden.

The next garden is close at hand. It is the garden of Joseph, who had had a new tomb built against the day of his own burial. But when he was convinced that

Jesus was the Christ, and had stood amid the throng that sneered and hooted at the dying Son of God and heard Him pray for His murderers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" he went away to Pilate and begged the privilege of carrying the body of Jesus into his own beautiful garden where his new tomb had been built. It was in this garden that Nicodemus and Joseph and the faithful women who never deserted Him tenderly laid the body of Jesus. Into this garden the soldiers came, and after Pilate had put the seal of the Roman Empire on the closed tomb, these old veteran soldiers kept watch, trying to keep a dead man in his grave. But they were not strong enough, for soon came Easter morning, the angel came down from heaven, and the light of his face so overwhelmed the soldiers that they fell like dead men, the Roman seal was broken, the stone rolled back from the door of the tomb, and Jesus came forth in mighty power to live forever.

There is still another garden which has to do with all the others. That is the garden that is to come, the Paradise of

God. John saw a glimpse of it in his wonderful vision on the Isle of Patmos. He says of it: "And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street thereof, and on this side of the river and on that, was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no curse any more; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: And his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign forever and ever."

II

We find here in this first garden of God, where man found his first home, the dignity and glory of work. Man was put into the garden not simply to revel in it, but to keep

it and to dress it. God made it beautiful to look at, fragrant to the smell, and delightful to the eyes; but man was to take care of it. It was made beautiful that he might enjoy his labor, but the work was no less necessary and important on that account. Work is the natural and normal condition of mankind. Work did not come because of sin. Work is not a punishment for sin. Before sin had found its way into the world, man was already a worker by the command of God. Indeed, if Eve had been at work instead of experimenting with her curiosity, she would have escaped the awful tragedy. There is no armor to protect us from temptation equal to that of good, wholesome, honest work. Idleness is always the nesting-place for sin. The shameful sins that have disgraced so many of the very wealthy and prominent men and women of our great cities during the last decade have been very largely the sins born of idleness. To be healthy, mentally, morally, and physically, we all need to have plenty of good wholesome work.

Every one of us has at least two gardens to look after. First, there is the garden in

our own hearts, the garden in each individual soul. True, the garden is no longer an Eden. An enemy hath come and sown tares in it. Instead of the fir-tree has come up the thorn, and instead of the myrtle-tree has come up the brier. But, thank God, the soil out of which the garden of Eden can be developed still lies latent within every one of us. Some one says that like seeds which have for ages lain buried beneath the soil of our primeval forests, there lie deep down in the sub-soil of our moral natures the germs of giant spirit powers and experiences. Fallen as we are, we are capable of being redeemed, reinstated in the conscious son-ship to our Heavenly Father. When we let Jesus Christ become the gardener in our hearts, the chief gardener, while under Him we do His will, it is wonderful what beautiful flowers and plants will grow and bloom in the garden of our hearts. Some of you have become disgusted with your own inner selves and never like to be left alone to contemplate the moral weeds that have grown up in your soul. If you would but yield the direction of your soul garden to Jesus Christ, the

beauty and loveliness which He would soon bring into existence there would be beyond your fondest dreams.

In addition, every one of us is a gardener in relation to the community in which we live. Alas, some sow only weeds and poisonous plants that put danger and death in the path of others. But we are intended to be a blessing to others. No man liveth to himself. We must either do good or evil to those about us. What sort of seeds are you planting in the hearts of your neighbors? We who are Christians should especially be aroused to the great truth suggested in our theme, that we are put into this garden of the world to help dress it and keep it. Nothing will kill out the religious life so quickly as idleness. Dr. George Truett, in a recent evangelistic sermon on the desire of those Greeks who came to Christ's disciples saying, "Sirs, we would see Jesus," declares that modern Christians in order to see Jesus must be busy for Him. The indolent Christian can not see much or know much of Jesus. Idleness is one of the most terrible foes to grace. It is the running stream that is

the healthy stream. The stagnant pond breeds mosquitoes and malaria and death. Many a Christian who is spiritually sick, he knows not why, would thrill with a new joy and new visions of Jesus if only he would be busy for Him. Doubt, unbelief, despondency, are all cut to pieces by industry and activity. Jesus says, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." It is in the activity, in the doing, that doubt perishes and faith and courage are fed their elixir of life.

I read a story recently of a young fellow who had lived for a time a very joyous Christian life, but who had fallen into a very low and uninteresting state spiritually. He had come to have many doubts and fears concerning the great doctrines of Christianity. He was very unhappy, and finally came to his pastor and opened his heart to him. The pastor listened to it all with a heart beating with tenderest pity for the youth. When the boy was done the pastor said, "It is a most serious hour for you, my friend; will you do me a favor this afternoon?" The boy's face brightened, and he said, "I will, with pleasure; I will be

glad to do anything I can for you." The pastor said, "I wish very much to have you go for a visit this afternoon to an old blind man. He is a very intelligent man, but he has lost his sight altogether. He is so poor that he is unable to hire any one to come and read to him, tho that is his greatest comfort. I will be much obliged if you will call on him this afternoon and read to him several chapters from the Bible."

The young fellow turned pale. How could he do it? What should he read? But when he suggested his fears to the pastor, he gave him a list of chapters to read, and asked him to come back again at seven that evening and tell him about his visit. The day passed by, and at seven the pastor was waiting for the young man with a good deal of interest. He was promptly on time, and came in with a transformed face. All the leaden sadness and doubt had disappeared. Instead, his face was eager, and laughter and tears chased each other in his enthusiastic sympathy. Before the pastor could speak or question him, he cried out, "Say not a word about my giving

up the Church—about my doubts and fears. When I read to the old blind man, he became so happy that he shouted for joy, and I think before he got done I shouted too. Oh, I have learned my lesson—henceforth I will be busy for my Lord."

George Macdonald, the poet preacher, has put with graphic clearness the price we must pay if we are to be true gardeners in God's garden of the world:

I said, "Let me walk in the fields";
He said, "Nay, walk in the town";
I said, "There are no flowers there";
He said, "No flowers, but a crown."

I said, "But the sky is black,
There is nothing but noise and din";
But He wept as He sent me back—
"There is more," He said. "There is sin."

I said, "But the air is thick
And fogs are veiling the sun";
He answered, "Yet souls are sick,
And souls in the dark undone."

I said, "I shall miss the light,
And my friends will miss me, they say";
He answered me, "Choose to-night
If I am to miss you, or they."

I pleaded for time to be given;
  He said, "Is it hard to decide?
It will not seem hard in heaven
  To have followed the steps of your Guide."

I cast one look at the fields,
  Then set my face to the town;
He said: "My child, do you yield?
  Will you leave the flowers for the crown?"

Then into His hand went mine,
  And into my heart came He,
And I walk in a light divine
  The path I had feared to see.

MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

"God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helpmeet for him."—Gen. 2:18.

JOSEPH PARKER, commenting on the loneliness of Adam, even in the Garden of Eden, when left to himself without comradeship, says that God, who is always thinking about what would be for man's good, did not make another man to be his comrade, because if He had, one would have killed the other, as Cain killed Abel. It seems to be one of the deepest laws of human nature that man thrust out alone with man must kill him, and that the only chance of keeping society together is by the marvelous influence of woman. For man to be alone means suicide; for two men to be together, means homicide; woman alone can keep society moving and healthful. The woman and the little child are the saviors of social order all over the world. For woman to be alone is as bad as for man

to be alone. Safety is in contrast, and in mutual complement. Reverence for womanhood will save any civilization from decay.

Whether you take this story told in these first chapters in Genesis as a literal statement of historical facts, or whether you take it as a poetical biography of the childhood of the world, really makes no difference as to the importance of its teaching. This beautiful notion of throwing man into a deep sleep to take a rib from him as the starting-point of a divinely planned companionship is very beautiful and full of very tender, significant suggestion. The greatest blessings that come to us are those that come as beautiful surprises as the free gift of God. And so love, which deepens into that supreme comradeship of human society, can not be brought about by shrewdness or scheming, but comes as the breath of the springtime of heaven.

I

The picturesque and beautiful imagery surrounding this story of the first marriage in Eden ought to silence much of the foolish

and absurd discussion carried on by people who ought to know better in all parts of the world. It is an absurd discussion to compare men and women, and try to make out that one is brainier than the other, or that one is superior to the other. It is the glory of the sexes that they are not alike and yet are alike. Some scholar commenting on the passage, "I will make him a helpmeet for him," says that literally it might be translated, "I will make him one over against him"—a counterpart. Each is the equal and complement of the other. There can be no true comparison between man and woman which implies an inferiority in either, for each has what the other lacks and lacks what the other has. The distinction of sex runs through intellect and heart and sensibilities. They are differently constituted and organized; but the two together make up the symmetrical humanity. Woman has her sphere, and they are comrades and helpmeets, but nothing that essentially unsexes a woman can fail to be a curse to humanity as a whole. Tennyson never sang with more of the prophetic insight than when he wrote:

The woman's cause is man's; they sink or rise
Together, dwarfed or Godlike, bond or free,
If she be small, slight natured, miserable,
How shall man grow?
The woman is not undeveloped man,
But diverse.

Yet in the long years, liker must they grow,
The man be more of woman, she of man;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
She mental breadth, nor fail in childhood care,
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind.

And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time
Sit side by side, full-summed in all their powers
Self-reverent each, and reverencing each;
Distinct in individualities
But like each other, as are those who love.

Then comes the statelier Eden back to man;
Then reigns the world's great bridals, chaste and calm,
Then springs the crowning race of human kind.

II

The fellowship of married love and the home which it builds is God's supreme gift to man and the supreme safeguard of civilization. It is the most important thing

in all our human life. The matter of supreme importance in the nation is not the schools, nor even the State or national government, but the family and home life of the people. If we have good homes, the abode of love and good comradeship, made sacred by the divine institution of marriage, where childhood is protected and developed and brought to manhood and womanhood in the atmosphere of mutual love and faith, out of such homes, indeed, builded on them as a base work, you may have good schools, good government, and a noble civilization. But the pure home is the fountain from which everything else of value springs.

It is well not to get away from this idea of comradeship in marriage. Both husband and wife are dependent upon each other for their truest development and their noblest success. Under our Christian dispensation, husband and wife are jointly and mutually partners in the home, and the child is to honor father and mother alike. The Christian idea of marriage is that married life is to be of mutual helpfulness and self-sacrifice. Paul declares that the husband stands in relation to the wife as Christ does

to the Church, a relation of infinite love and tenderness.

Many a famous man has come to his power through the love and fidelity of his wife. Oliver Wendell Holmes once said that he had often seen a tall ship glide by against the tide, as if drawn by some invisible bowline with a hundred strong arms pulling it. Her sails unfilled, her streamers drooping, she had neither side-wheel nor stern-wheel; still she moved on, stately, in serene triumph, as with her own life. But he knew that on the other side of the ship, hidden beneath the great bulk that swam so majestically, there was a little toilsome steam-tug, with a heart of fire and arms of iron, that was tugging it bravely on; and he knew that if the little steam-tug untwined her arm, and left the ship, it would wallow and roll about, and drift hither and thither, and go off with the refluent tide, no man knows whither. And so we have often seen a great genius, high-decked, full-freighted, idle-sailed, gay-pennoned, that but for the toiling arms and brave, warm-beating heart of the faithful little wife that nestled close to him, so that no wind or wave could part

them, would have gone down with the stream and have been heard of no more.

And, on the other hand, let no woman imagine for a moment that there is any greater happiness in this world than that which comes from loving fidelity in the home life. Mrs. Browning, herself a most loving and devoted wife, beautifully sang:

The sweetest lives are those to duty wed,
Whose deeds, both great and small,
Are close-knit strands of an unbroken thread,
Where love ennobles all.
The world may sound no trumpets, ring no bells;
The Book of Life the shining record tells.
Thy love shall chant its own beatitudes
After its own life-working. A child's kiss
Set on thy sighing lips shall make thee glad;
A poor man served by thee shall make thee rich;
A sick man helped by thee shall make thee strong;
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense
Of service which thou renderest.

III

The fulfilment of the ideal of family life depends upon the complete sympathy between the husband and the wife, on their

love and their hope and their enthusiasm for common ends. Out in the Rocky Mountains it is a common sight to see a train being drawn up the grade by two locomotives. The grade is so steep and the load so heavy that it requires the combined power of the two engines working together to reach the summit. So the building up of a true home life is a matter of such momentous importance and the difficulties in the way are so varied and so complicated that it requires the united force and sympathy of both the household engines. Earth holds no sadder sight than that of a husband and wife drifting apart in their purposes, ambitions, and interests. The same roof is over their heads at night; they meet to partake of their food at the same table, and then each hastens away, seeking that which is his or her special interest. The beginnings of all such driftings apart should be carefully watched for and at once overcome.

> It is the little rift within the lute
> That by and by will make the music mute
> And, ever widening, slowly silence all.

The little rift within the lover's lute,
Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,
That, rotting inward, slowly molders all.

IV

The most beautiful thing about this picture of the first marriage in Eden is the approving smile of God. The Heavenly Father brooded over it all with infinite love. The conscious presence of God was as natural to them in their innocence as the perfume of the flowers, or the breath of the rivers that watered the garden of Paradise. And so if we are to have noble homes and beautiful family life where love shall be at its best and no burdens or struggles shall be able to crush out hope, we must not leave God out of account. Make the home "of the earth earthy," where only secular things are talked about, where only worldly success is aspired after, and you will corrupt its atmosphere to such a point of unwholesomeness that the noblest life and the most abiding joy will be impossible. Take religion out of the home, do away with prayer and thoughts of eternity, leave the spirit of

worship and love to God out of family life, and all the relations between husband and wife, between parents and children, to a very great extent lose their holy and sacred character. On the other hand, how many times I have seen a home that has been broken by sin and vice, where husband and wife, once devoted and loving, had lost the joy out of their fellowship, and where childhood was being robbed of all that beautiful sense of united care and protection that children know in a home full of love and confidence—and into a situation like that I have known the awakening of husband and wife to a sense of God and His love which led to worship and a restoration of spiritual communion, to bring together again the broken fragments of that home and so cement them by the wonderful binding force of love that all the old beauty and joy of home life was known again. I have no happier memories than scenes like that which it has been my privilege to have a part in bringing about through the infinite grace and love of God.

My friends, make much of your religion if you would ask much of God in the happiness

of your home. I never can talk on this subject without a tender heart. My own childhood, tho it was lived on the frontier among the rudest physical surroundings, was so glorified by love, and the atmosphere it breathed was so fragrant of worship, and so full of inspiration that came from faith in God and heaven and the eternal life, that I have always carried it in my heart as the richest possible inheritance that could have come to me. And my heart grieves when I see children growing up without receiving that tender religious teaching from father and mother which was the sweetest thing that I knew in my childhood. My friends, if you want your children to rise up and call you blest, and remember you after you are gone with benedictions, and tell about you for generations with reverent love, then I pray you by your reverence and your loving devotion to God bring the divine presence into the home life where your children are growing into manhood and womanhood.

V

Let us never forget that the home is the place where we must grow old and die, and should therefore be kept sweet and full of comfort against the days of weakness. A few years ago an English lawyer was called up in the night to go to the house of a farmer several miles away. On arriving, he found that the farmer was dying, and wished to make a will. The lawyer asked for pen, ink, and paper. There happened to be neither pen nor ink in the house. The lawyer had not brought any himself, and what was he to do? "Any lead-pencils?" he asked. No, they had none. The farmer was sinking fast, tho quite conscious. At last the lawyer saw, up on the side of the bedroom door, column upon column of figures in chalk. So he took a piece of chalk and wrote out on the smooth hearthstone the last will and testament of the dying man. The farmer died that night. The hearthstone was taken up, and taken into court, duly registered, and its provisions executed. As I read that strange incident, it occurred to me that that was not the only

hearthstone that was being registered in a court-room, and that if a man could stand the registry of his hearthstone, there was not much fear from any other record that could be brought against him.

The wise man will make sweet and fragrant the home where he is to grow old and sicken and die. The homeless Goldsmith sings:

In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,
Amid these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose;
I still had hopes—for pride attends us still—
Amidst the swains to show my book-learned skill;
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt and all I saw;
And as a hare, whom hounds and horn pursue,
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return—and die at home at last.

PARLEYING WITH TEMPTATION

"And the woman said unto the serpent."—Gen. 3: 2.

Some people have sneered at the idea of a good God permitting His children, whom He loves, to be tempted. They think that life would be a great deal better if there had been no possibility of evil. But in order to do that, it would have been necessary for us to have been made without any will, blindly obeying instinct, simply animated machines. Watkinson, the English preacher, saw a certain mechanism described as being "fool-proof," that is, the machine is so constructed that even the most stupid can not easily disarrange it, neither can they well injure themselves. There are persons who seem to think that this world should have been "fool-proof"; that it ought not to have been easy to hurt ourselves, that it ought to have been impossible to destroy ourselves; we ought to have water that would not drown, fire that would not burn, gases that would not poison. But these people fail

to consider that if it were possible to call into existence a "fool-proof" world, it would be impossible to people it with men and women and children with the hopes and ambitions and possibilities which animate us. We owe more than we can dream to the fact and imminence of danger. It is thus that our faculties are disciplined, that we have reached strength and acuteness of mind and body.

Mark Guy Pearse aptly says that while it is true we might have been placed in such circumstances that we never would have been tempted and therefore would not have fallen, but then again we would not have risen. Innocence is not a virtue until it has had temptation and opportunity to sin; then innocence is strengthened by resistance, and exalted by victory into virtue. Everywhere and in everything that is a poor, languid, sickly kind of life which never had a chance of overcoming. Temptation overcome is the way, the only way, to the very throne of God. Suppose, to return to Watkinson's figure, that this world were morally "fool-proof"—that is, that it were impossible for us to go wrong—what manner of men

should we be? Not men at all. The constitution of things does not tempt us to go wrong, but the possibility of transgression is the condition of our greatness and its perfection. The world was evidently not designed for amiable lunatics, but for the wise, the strong, the faithful; and such are educated into perfection through difficulty and temptation and danger.

Amongst the brave men of old there was a notion that when one conquered an enemy the strength of the enemy went into the conqueror, and he became so much stronger by every conquest, and thus went on from strength to strength. So God grows His heroes by overcoming. And this is the law of all great success. A young man comes here to Kansas City to enter into business or professional life. He does not expect to get on without any struggle. He knows that if he is to win his way, he must work hard, keep his eyes open, and be ready to resist temptations to weakness and dissipation, and strive to overcome. If he has any true metal in him, he rejoices in real difficulties, where it is a fair fight and a chance to win by hard work. It knits the

muscles of his character; it develops in him courage, determination, and heroism. So you can never develop great moral character without the resistance of temptation to evil. There may be many questions about this that we can not answer, but of this we are sure, we never could have been the kind of men and women pictured to us in the manhood of Jesus Christ without the discipline of temptation overcome.

I

What I have said in this introduction applies really to the next ten sermons in our series, but it seemed more appropriate to have it come here at the opening discussion of this question of temptation to sin. Our special theme at this moment is the danger of parleying with evil; the weakness that must always come to us when we give way to a discussion with the tempter. Eve's position was invulnerable if she had but turned her back upon Satan and given herself in loyalty to God. But when she condescended to talk the matter over with

the enemy, and permitted herself to listen to his sneers and insinuations against the goodness and truthfulness of God, the beginning of the end was in sight. People who question the credibility of this story of temptation in the Garden of Eden are always compelled to admit that whether it is accepted as a literal story or is only a poetic or allegorical history of the beginning of evil, it is nevertheless true to life, and as true to-day as on any day in the history of man.

Dr. McGee Waters, when he was a little boy, had for his companion a sister two years younger than himself. They had for a playmate a neighbor's child nine or ten years of age, a little older than they. This older girl seemed to the younger children to be the sum of all that was beautiful. It was a great treat to them to go to her house. She lived in a much bigger house than they did, and she was the only child, and her parents doted on her and denied her almost nothing. One rainy afternoon the younger children had been invited, and had gone to the great house, and in the splendid living-room the playthings had all

been gathered and they entered into their Eden. They played store, housekeeping, church, and many other things. The little girl's mother had gone away for an hour or two, and she told the children they were to have a good time, and also told Edmonia, her own daughter, that she was not to cross the hall or go into the parlor. The children had been into the parlor many times when the mother was home and had admired the beautiful things. Among other things, there was a cabinet filled with rare and beautiful ceramics and miniatures. There was also some rare china which the lady of the house prized beyond any other possession, and she had told the children that it had belonged to her great ancestor when she had entertained General and Lady Washington. Edmonia had been told never to touch these things, and how exceedingly valuable they were, and how some day they would be hers.

All went well until they were having a doll's wedding, and in preparing for the feast the children suggested how grand it would be to use the Washington china. At first Edmonia was firm. Her mother had told her not to go there and she would not.

Then the little boy began to take on the airs of a man and dared Edmonia to use the dishes. She refused and then she cried, and then the boy dared her some more. She got mad and stamped her foot and sprang up, ran into the parlor, turned the key in the cabinet and took out the priceless china and brought it into the doll's wedding. But somehow they did not enjoy it, and the feast was spoiled. Finally one of the three jumped up quickly and the table was upset and one of the priceless plates was broken into bits, and all three children burst into tears. It was not anger this time, but terror and regret and shame that shook them with sobs.

The little boy and his sister went home and left the other girl to face her judgment day alone. About dark that night the lady came rushing over to their house and wanted to know where Edmonia was. She said that she had been home for over an hour and had found the broken plate, and had looked everywhere and could not find the little girl. She had called and called, but there had been no reply. The alarm was raised and all the neighbors started out to

find her. Just about the time they were getting desperate, a little figure, all sobbing and covered with straw, came rushing into the house. She had felt so terribly that she had made up her mind to run away. She had gotten as far as the straw-rack behind the barn and crawled in there and waited to die. The little soul suffered enough, no doubt, to die, but the gathering shadows of the night brought her back to her mother's arms.

Now, my friends, you have there the whole story of the Garden of Eden in miniature, and most of us could people it ourselves and portray it ourselves out of our own experience. The danger with the little girl was that she parleyed with the boy about it and allowed herself to be excited with his dare and challenge to disobey her mother. The danger with Eve was that she listened to the tempter, and not only listened, but talked back and entered into conversation with him, and that parley was fatal.

You may see the same thing in reality pictured from another point of view in the case of Esau and the loss of his birthright. He comes home from the hunting, having

had hard luck, and is hungry and asks Jacob for food. Jacob takes advantage of his brother's appetite and offers to trade him a dish of pottage for his birthright.

Now Esau, if he had been awake to his real manhood, would have turned away from the very sight and smell of that food as if it were a deadly poison. For to lose his birthright was to forfeit his real place as a man on earth, his true relation to God and to his family. But he was hungry, and to a man of his make-up that means a great deal. He stopt to parley with Jacob and make a better trade if he could. And the more he looked at the food, and smelled it, the more it seemed to him that it was worth all the birthrights in the world. The birthright was something spiritual, shadowy, and unseen, but the pot of lentils smelled sweet in his nostrils and bore down everything else. He feels he is going to die. Prof. Hugh Black says that a man of Esau's type is always sure he will die if he does not get what he wants when the passion is on him; and supposing he does die, it will be poor consolation that he did not barter this intangible and shadowy

blessing of his birthright. "Behold I am at the point to die; and what profit shall this birthright do to me?"

Now, in all these cases the lesson is practically the same. To parley with the tempter, to admit that our doing right or wrong is an open question, is to be overthrown. True triumph morally must be based upon a decision, absolute, irrevocable, "I will do right tho the heavens fall." When a man or woman of real character makes a decision like that, there is no more parleying. The question is not open for discussion. And, depend upon it, as long as it is open for discussion, your soul is in deadly danger of overthrow and destruction.

II

We are living in a time when all this is of peculiar significance. Everything is questioned to-day. There is nothing that men dare not call in question. There is nothing so sacred that it can escape challenge, and men and women are being ruined in multitudes because, like the little girl in

Dr. Waters's story, they can not stand being dared or challenged to experiment with evil. It is a time when men and women seem reckless in trying to see how near they can come to the precipice of eternal disaster and yet escape with a whole character. But it is as true to-day as it was in the days of Eve that to parley with temptation is to take the risk of ruin. A famous chemist recently said that cyanid of potassium is the most dangerous of all poisons because of a singular quality it possesses. It is in appearance so very attractive to those who handle it that they are often seized with an almost overwhelming desire to eat it. To one man who has a fondness for saccharin substance, it suggests sugar; and to another, snow newly fallen; but to both it is so alluring that they may only overcome the temptation to put it in their mouths by great force of will power. The very men who make it, and who are most familiar with its deadly properties, are pursued by an unreasonable desire to eat the poison, and as long as they remain in its vicinity this extraordinary craving endures. They know that to give way to the craving means death

almost instantly and horribly, and as a consequence are usually able to resist the strange temptation, but during the last ten years, in one large manufacturing chemist's laboratory, four intelligent and steady workmen have committed suicide in that way. The owner of the plant recently said that many times when in contact with the cyanid fumes, he himself had been compelled to leave the work precipitately for fear of yielding to the deadly temptation. What a graphic illustration of the deadly power which sin exercises over the human imagination and heart. It also suggests the wisdom of keeping out of temptation as much as possible. It is great folly for men and women to thrust themselves where they know the dangerous fascination of their besetting sin will be felt.

III

After all is said, certain safety is only to be found in the active exercise of ourselves in doing that which is right and true and good. Eve's folly began in settling down

to gaze on the forbidden fruit. If she had been going about her work with a song of praise to the God who had created this beautiful garden for her gladness, or with thoughts of how she might make it still more beautiful by her loving service, Satan would have had no chance at her. Christmas Evans, one of the quaint old preachers, in one of his sermons gives a parable, telling how the devil once went out determined to do a mighty business. He came upon a plowboy working in the field, and he said to himself, "I will tempt the boy to rob his master; then he will get into prison; 'twill bring him into bad company, so that he will get worse and be transported, and ultimately get to the gallows, and I shall have his soul forever." The devil strode across the moor and, as he approached the plowboy, he heard him singing:

> My God, the spring of all my joys,
> The life of my delights,
> The glory of my brightest days,
> And comfort of my nights.

"Ah!" said the devil, "he won't answer my purpose," and off he went. So, flying

over hill and dale, he came to a quiet nook in a valley between two high mountains where there was a sweet little cottage overgrown with ivy, with its porch covered with flowers. Beneath the porch a maiden sat, knitting. Said he, "I will entice her away to the big town and lead her into ways of folly and sin and shame. She shall perish in an infirmary, and her soul shall be mine forever." He drew near to whisper in her ear some temptation, but he heard her singing:

> Jesus, I love thy charming name,
> 'Tis music to mine ear;
> Fain would I sound it out so loud
> That earth and heaven should hear.

"That won't answer," said he, and so he flew away until he came to where an old man named Williams lived, and as he drew near he said, "Here old Williams lives. He has served God these fifty years, and if I can get him now what a trophy that would be!" So he went in and passed up-stairs where Williams lay dying. "Now," said he, "I will make him doubt and die in despair."

Satan crossed the room to get at the dying man's ear, and as he came close to him, Williams stretched out his hand and said, "Yea, tho I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Satan shrank back abashed into the darkness. And so he would always if he found our hearts and our thoughts taken up with doing our duty. It is the earnest, active soul, that is positively doing right, who is beyond the reach of Satan. Paul sums it all up in his word to the Galatians: "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

THE FIRST LIE

"The serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die."—Gen. 3:4.

We have here the first record of a lie. Satan has been making suggestions and sneers to Eve, but up to this time he has not dared to openly attack God. If Eve had held firm to her loyalty and refused to open the door of her mind and heart to the suggestions of the evil one, she would have been guiltless and Satan never could have made an entrance into her heart. She held the key in her own hand, and if she had not opened her heart to the insinuations of Satan, she would have held safely the gold of her character.

Many years ago a band of Apache Indians captured the army paymaster's safe out in the Western mountains. The safe contained about seven thousand dollars in gold. It weighed four hundred pounds and worked with a combination. None of the Indians had ever examined one at close quarters

before, but they all knew why it was hauled about from post to post and were very anxious to get hold of the money. They first pounded off the knob with stones, thinking the door would then fly open. When that failed, they tried their tomahawks on the chilled steel, hoping to cut a hole in it. After they had worn their tomahawks out in that effort, some of them remembered that they had seen iron softened by fire, and their next move was to give that safe a roasting of many hours; but it proved to be fireproof. They threw big rocks upon it while it was still hot, and dented it till it looked as if it had been through the war, but they were as far from the money as ever. Then they dragged it up the side of the mountain and tumbled it over a precipice several hundred feet high. They expected that when it lighted on the rocks beneath it would burst open like a watermelon, but the only damage done was to break off one of the wheels underneath. They left it lying there where it fell for a while, and then came back and carried it to the river and left it to soak for a week. It was thought that this would soften it up, and great was their

chagrin to find it as hard as ever. They knew that white men sometimes tore things open with gunpowder, so they set to work to blast the safe open, and not knowing how to do it, they spoiled a half-a-dozen Indians and did no damage to the safe. Thus for a month the Indians worked at that safe harder than they had ever worked at anything else in all their lives, but they failed to get inside of it, and finally tumbled it into a deep ravine and left it. A year or two later, after peace was made, the government got on the track of the safe, and an ambulance and a guard were sent for it. It was found lying in the bed of the creek with a pile of driftwood around it. It was a rusty, dented, lonesome-looking old safe. I suppose there never was a worse looking safe so far as outside appearances are concerned. But when it was brought into the fort and the door was opened it yielded up its contents without the loss of a dollar. True, genuine character, that stubbornly maintains its loyalty to God in simple obedience, is like that. You may thrust it into the den of lions with Daniel; you may put it into the fiery furnace with the Hebrew

worthies; you may put it into the stocks with Paul and Silas, or into the prison with John Bunyan, and it will come out with all its treasures safe and secure. Wise, indeed, was Solomon, when he advised, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." It was because Eve left the doors of her heart ajar and gave entrance to the suggestions of the evil one that Satan triumphed.

I

If Satan had approachèd Eve at first with the rude and direct declaration that her God was a liar, he would have lost his case and she would have turned from him in disgust. But after she had listened to his suggestions and began to argue and debate with him, a subtle change took place. She had prepared her heart by parleying with the tempter to hear his lie about God without being shocked. At first he is fairly reverent in his references to God, in his conversation with Eve, but now the mask of reverence is thrown aside. The doubts which he

has aroused in her mind having done their work, he does not need longer to pretend to regard God's word. He now openly contradicts God and charges God with petty jealousy and ignoble fear lest man attain equality with him. And to Satan's bold denial of the truth of God's word Eve attempts no reply, and an ominous silence ensues. We may wonder that she, so recently perfect from the hand of her Creator, could bring herself to listen without even a word of protest to the blasphemy of Satan. But the explanation is that her parleying with the tempter has resulted in the drugging of her conscience so that that which would have seemed horrible to her at first she now receives without a shock. Who of us has not known some evolution of sin like that? Be careful lest the conscience be drugged. For Satan attempts our overthrow in the same way. The form may vary with the individual, from a refined worldliness in one case to a vulgar sensuality in another; but in whatever form temptation comes to us, there are always these two ways of dealing with it, to turn from it with scorn, confidently affirming our trust in God

and our allegiance to Him, as did Jesus Christ, or to stand and parley and debate with the enemy, as did Eve. One method leads to the comfort of angels and the triumph of the spirit and the other to sorrow and death. For "the wages of sin is death," to-day as surely as in the days of Eve. The devil says to men to-day when they are tempted to sin, "Ye shall not surely die," but he is lying to us as he did to Eve. For Eve did die, as to her soul, at once; as to her body, after she was driven forth from Eden; and her knowledge of good and evil made her not a god, but a sinner. The promises which the enemy of our souls holds out to men to-day are no better. Satan baits his trap with hopes of liberty, happiness and final truth, and when the trap has fallen and the soul is ensnared, it finds it has been the victim of the falsehoods of the evil one.

II

We may be sure from this study that anybody who promises us more than God does is trying to deceive us. God had warned

Eve that to taste the forbidden fruit meant death, but Satan tells her that it will mean the open eye and the alert mind and a personality like a god. If we are to credit the annals of the Russian Empire, there once existed a noble order of merit, which was greatly coveted by the nobility of the Russian Court. It was, however, conferred only on the peculiar favorites of the Czar, or on the distinguished heroes of the kingdom. But another class shared in its honor in a very questionable form. Those nobles or favorites who either became a burden to the Czar or who stood in his way, received this decoration only to die. The pin-point was tipped with poison, and when the order was being fastened on the breast by the imperial messenger, the flesh of the person was "accidentally" pricked. Death ensued, as next morning the individual who had been so highly honored with imperial favor was found dead in bed from apoplexy. So Satan offered to confer a brilliant decoration, god-like in its nobility, on Eve and her husband, but it was a poisoned pin-prick, and she knew too late that "The wages of sin is death."

Satan is always appearing to men and women in some beautiful and charming guise appealing peculiarly to their situation, and it is not until too late that the mask is thrown off and we learn that anyone who by any promise lures us from obedience to God is to us the very devil. Bates, the naturalist, found on the Amazon a brilliant spider that spread itself out as a flower. It was most attractive to insects, promising as it did a rich pasture-ground for food. But when they lighted on it, seeking sweetness, they found horror, torment, death. Such transformations are common in human life. Things of poison and blood are everywhere displaying themselves in forms of innocence, in dyes of beauty. "The perfection of mimicry," Watkinson says, "is in the moral world, deceiving the very elect." Satan is transformed into an angel of light; his blasted brow is disguised by a wreath, his fiery darts seem glittering scepters, the smoke of his torment goes up as incense. The same preacher recalls that another celebrated naturalist one day saw a bird drowning in a lake, and he felt sure that the bird had mistaken the water for the

sky. It was a bright, transparent day, the clear, calm lake reflected the sky and the whole landscape in its depths, and the bird, not discerning that the world below it was a world of shadows, was betrayed to its doom. So all the glories of the upper world appear inverted in the world of evil. The lofty, the pure, the beautiful, the bright, are all seductively reflected in the depths of Satan; they are exaggerated there, they are seen in surpassing magnitude and splendor; error seems some nobler truth, disobedience some larger liberty, forbidden things seem the sweetest flowers and the mellowest fruit of Paradise.

III

Eve learned, and we ought to learn from our theme in the study of her example, that the size of the bait does not excuse the folly of yielding to sin. It was the dazzling bait of becoming wise and associating with lofty personalities which deceived Eve and seemed to make the risk worth while. So men and women now are led to their ruin. A man who ordinarily tells the truth is

ready to excuse the man for lying if he may win a fortune by it. A woman who has meant to be true and good is ready to parley with the tempter if thereby she may climb high in social splendor. The sin that would be condemned at once where the stake is small and there is little to be gained by it, seems to the drugged and bewildered soul to be a venial offense if it is to bring great material success. Ah, such sophistries are only the delusion of the evil one. There is an historical story of the Duchess Isabella who, wishing earnestly to obtain some object, was instructed by the crafty court astrologer to kiss day by day for a hundred days a certain beautiful picture and she would receive her wish. It was a sinister trick, for the picture contained a subtle poison which stained the lips with every salutation. Little by little the golden tresses of the queenly woman turned white, her eyes became dim, her color faded, her lips became black; but, infatuated, the suicidal kiss was continued, until before the hundred days were complete the royal dupe lay dead. Alas! how many such cases we see to-day of men and women who are bent on some

worldly triumph, upon obtaining some material success, and are willing to have it at any cost to their better natures. We see men and women who kiss day by day the goddess of worldliness, and tho there is poison in every salutation, and they are losing before our very eyes all that which makes men and women noblest and most worthy, still they press on and pay their devotion to their worldly god while the heart hardens, and the conscience loses its power to warn, and the soul languishes and dies even before the body has begun to decay.

THE LOST PARADISE

"She took of the fruit thereof and did eat."—Gen. 3:6.

YES, that is what she did; but the evolution that went on before that is the interesting and important theme for our consideration. She would not have disobeyed God's law and bidden defiance to her Creator offhand. Something else had been going on. As you read the story you see the common and ordinary evolution of sin. I think it will be interesting and, I trust, helpful for us to examine this evolution, for something like it goes on every time any man or woman gives way to sin against God. Briefly note the stages of this evolution!

I

It began with listening to the devil. When Satan first drew near to Eve, clothed with the skin of the serpent, he began his attack upon her by insinuating that, after all, God

was not really good to His children. "Can it be possible," says that smooth, insinuating voice, in substance, and I imagine with a sardonic smile, "that your God has shut off a part of the garden from you and forbidden you to eat of some of the trees of the garden?" Now, if Eve had gone her way and let Satan go his, she would have been safe. If, instead of listening to the insinuations against the goodness of God, she had recalled the bountiful provision and loving care which God had made and exercised in preparing this beautiful garden with all necessary food and with abounding beauty, instead of having mischievous and dangerous doubts born in her soul, her heart would have overflowed with gratitude, and she would have gone her way singing her thanksgiving among the fragrant trees of God's garden. But, alas! she listened. And there is where we all get into trouble. We can not help being tempted. Jesus Christ, who was without spot or blemish of any kind; whose heart and whose thoughts were pure and clean, was tempted; severely, terribly tempted. But He did not listen to the enemy. At every temptation He met

Satan with the Word of God, and came out of His forty days of temptation in the wilderness as spotless as when He entered it. It is in listening to the evil one that the danger begins.

A little boy ten years old a while ago found in a gutter in New York City a beautiful diamond ring worth four thousand dollars. He was the son of poor people to whom only one dollar would be a matter of importance. But he had had clean, wholesome Christian training. He did not play with the ring, nor take it home, nor wish he could keep it, nor in any way parley with the temptation. Straight as a die he went to the police station and told the police sergeant all about it, and just where and how he found it. The owner, a wealthy woman, was soon found, and has exprest her purpose to see that that boy has a good education. Now it is easy to see how, if that boy had given way to evil longings about that ring, it might have been the beginning of his ruin, and transformed him into a criminal; but as it was, he was tremendously strengthened in righteousness by that one straightforward deed.

II

The next stage of the evolution after the listening was the seeing. After she had listened to the evil one she began to study the tree that was forbidden. The record says, "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eye." There is the second stage of the evolution. Eve let her eyes linger lovingly about the fruit that she knew she had no right to touch. Be careful what you see. Be careful what you go on purpose to see, knowing that it will not have a tendency to make you a better man or a nobler woman. The perilous thing about much of the theatrical presentation of our time is that its atmosphere and spirit and the suggestion which it gives to the young mind are often such as to take the bloom off innocence, and makes it possible for men and women to picture to themselves vicious and evil things without being shocked. A thing does not have to be broken all to pieces in order to lose its beauty and usefulness. Henry Ward Beecher once said that he liked beautiful china cups, but he had noticed that when a

handle got knocked off from one of his cups, that cup was spoiled for him. And that, if he had a beautiful mirror and it was cracked, it was spoiled for his eye; its perfectness was gone. There are many things in these great cities which men and women can not see without being damaged. As an eel, if he were to wriggle across your carpet, would leave a slime which no brush could take off, so there are many things which no person can behold and ever recover from the sight. Parents sometimes talk about giving their children, especially their boys, freedom in which to see life, as it is said. One might as well bring up a child by cutting some of the cords in his body and lacerating his nerves, and scarring and tattooing him, as an element of beauty, as to think of developing true manhood or womanhood by bringing youth up to see life—to see its abominable lusts; to listen to its hideous incarnations of wit; to see its infernal wickedness; to see its extravagant and degrading scenes; to see its miserable carnalities; to see its imaginations set on fire of hell; to see all those temptations and delusions which lead to perdition. Nobody

gets over the sight of these things. And to get yourself accustomed to sights and sounds that sneer at God, and the Bible, and make a joke of Sabbath and the Church, is to get yourself ready with Eve to forfeit Paradise.

III

The next step was the play of Eve's imagination. First, she listened to the insinuations of evil; then she looked at the fruit until it was pleasant and beautiful to the eyes; and then she began to dream of becoming wise and brilliant until she should be like the gods. Take care what you dream about when you are alone. It is the theme of the secret imagination that has more really to do with our outward conduct in the end than anything else. Thomas à Kempis, in his famous description of the successive steps of a successful temptation, says that first, there is the bare thought of the sin. Then, upon that, there is a picture of the sin formed and hung up on the secret screen of the imagination. A strange sweetness from that picture is then let down drop

by drop into the heart; and then that secret sweetness soon secures the consent of the whole soul, and the thing is done. That is a graphic and powerful description, but it is as true as it is picturesque and strong.

The Japanese have a proverb that a snake is quite orderly and straight so long as you keep it in a bamboo stick, but the moment it gets out it begins to wriggle and act snaky. My friend, be careful how you turn an impure thought, an evil suggestion, loose in your imagination to wriggle and squirm itself through all your thinking and dreaming until it has made itself at home there. A temptation to yield to that thing finds all your walls of resistance broken down.

A young boy of seventeen, who worked in a carpenter shop, was sent out in one of our cities to take the measure for a new counter in a saloon. It was very cold weather. The saloon-keeper mixed up a hot drink and pushed it over the counter to him. "It'll cost you nothing," he said; "drink it down, and you'll soon stop shivering, my boy." "He meant it kindly, too, and didn't think any harm," said the boy, telling about it afterward. "That's what

made it harder to push it back and say I didn't want it." "It must have been a big temptation," said the friend to whom the boy was talking. "That saloon-keeper might have started you on the road to ruin." "Well," replied the young carpenter, frankly, "I'd rather have had it than some other kinds. You see, it takes two to make a temptation. There is no saloon-keeper and no cold weather can make me drink when I don't want to. The temptation I'm afraid of is the one that I am ready for before it comes, by hankering after it." That was a shrewd boy, and nothing could be truer than that diagnosis of temptation. Be careful that the substance of your dreams and longings are such as make for a wholesome personality.

IV

Then she took the fruit and ate it. There is the fourth stage in the evolution of the loss of Paradise. Remember, in all this, that Satan could have had no power to entice Eve to disobey God if she had not listened, and let her eyes play on the for-

bidden fruit, and dreamed and imagined happy results from her disobedience. St. James, speaking of temptation, says, "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." Dr. Arnot, commenting on that sentence, says it means literally "drawn out and hooked." The first expression does not yet mean drawn by the hook; it means rather drawn to the hook. The first is a drawing toward the hook and the second is a dragging by the hook. If you have ever watched a skilful angler fishing, you have noted that no noise is made and no danger permitted to meet the eye of the victim. By some enticing lure the fish is drawn from his safe hiding-place in the brook or river or lake. The victim, not perceiving the danger, is by its own "lust"—its own appetite—drawn to its doom. The next part of the process is the act of fixing the barbed hook in the victim's jaws. When the fish has been enticed by the bait to swallow the hook then there is another drawing; but how different from the first! The fisherman does not now hide himself, and tread softly and speak in a whisper. There is no more gentleness. He

rudely drags his helpless prey to the shore and takes his life. I have often seen it like that in the devil's hooking of human souls. Perhaps some of you even now are following the bait that is drawing you away from safety into waters that you know to be perilous.

Now, the best, and indeed the only, preventive against these baited hooks of evil, is to be fed to satisfaction with a sweetness in which there is no sin and no danger. It is the human soul that is empty, that is not satisfied with the peace of God, that is easily drawn into the pleasures of sin. It is not by living a negative life, simply standing on guard against the approach of evil, that we can insure our safety. It is the living positively a deep and earnest life of good deeds, following on noble purposes, that makes us secure. No man is safe from moral overthrow who lives a life on the surface—a haphazard life from day to day. But it is possible for us to live a deep, earnest, spiritual life that will be rich enough to so satisfy us that the devil's insinuations against God will wake no doubt in our minds. Recent experiments in re-

claiming the great deserts have called attention to the fact that below the earth's surface there is a vast and seemingly inexhaustible supply of water whose existence we little suspect until we begin to tap these hidden sources. Something like that exists in the soul. As our nature deepens through worship and service and honest doing of duty, we discover ever new sources of spiritual supply, ever new and hidden springs by which the higher nature is nourished. This is the true source of the peace and security of a human soul. Give yourself up in genuineness and sincerity to do God's will and you will have reached the secret springs of religious life and health. It will be to you the most beautiful of all miracles, the conscious communion with God, a joyous divineness filling earth and heaven —a heightened blush upon the rose, a lovelier glow in the evening sky, a richer zest for the perfect, the good, the pure of heart. To have this hidden resource of joy in God and in His constant presence in the soul is like the gushing of a clear, sweet fountain in desert places, the secret source of happiness, the banisher of gloom,

suspicion, jealousy, fear, and distrust. If we have the secret understanding of what God means for us—that we are His dear children, His helpers and coworkers in His great purpose of making the world happier and better—fears vanish like morning mist, anxieties disappear; for, as some one has said, all God's dice are loaded and we are sure, if we are on His side, to win in the game. Life is worth living when you can live like that, and we can catch the heart-throb of a man like Maltbie Babcock when he sings:

Be strong!
We are not here to play, to dream, to drift,
We have hard work to do, and loads to lift.
Shun not the struggle, face it, 'tis God's gift.
Be strong!

Be strong!
Say not the days are evil—who's to blame?
And fold the hands and acquiesce—O shame!
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name,
Be strong!

Be strong!
It matters not how deep intrenched the wrong,
How hard the battle goes, the day, how long;
Faint not, fight on! To-morrow comes the song.
Be strong!

THE SINNER BECOMES THE TEMPTER

"She gave unto her husband with her, and he did eat."—Genesis 3:6.

SOMEWHERE out in the Atlantic Ocean there is a steamer whose crew is eagerly feeling on the far-off ocean bed, trying to hook up the broken end of a deep-sea cable. Already the steamer has had to come back to port for more coal and supplies and additional lengths of cable. One end of the broken cable has been picked up and fastened to a buoy, but the other end has thus far eluded the vigilant rescuers. A dozen times the grapple has caught hold of it, and every time, before it could be brought on board and secured, the cable has parted again, being broken by the high waves. This has happened so often, and the breaks have been so extensive, that at the last report there was no less than forty-six miles between the broken ends of that cable. The break was a matter of a minute, repairing

it is a matter of some months already, and no one knows how many more.

Eve's sin was like that broken cable. It was the work of a moment, but it broke the cable connection between her heart and God, and caused her to be to Adam not what God had purposed her to be, a helpmeet that should lead him upward, but a tempter that should lead him downward.

I

The first great message of our theme, which I wish to impress on our thoughts, is the fact of our influence upon others. Whether we will or not, we are constantly affecting other lives than our own. No man can say, "I am my own, and I will live my own life and have no effect or influence on anybody else." That is absolutely impossible. The late Dr. Reuen Thomas declared that an individual life would have to start as the Scriptures say of the life of Melchizedek, without father and without mother. We all of us are related. Whether we choose to acknowledge it or not, the fact remains.

We need not concern ourselves, however, about remote ancestries. Those immediately back of us we can not help but know have influenced us more or less. We see family likenesses extending not alone to facial expression, but family likenesses extending to character. If you find a proud and obstinate mother, you are pretty sure, if there are children in the family, to find also a proud and obstinate son; if you find a weak and indolent father, you will not be surprised if somewhere in the family you find a still weaker and more indolent daughter. Our relationships count for something. They are not mere matters of convenience. Soul, as well as body, descends. And yet every man has something which individualizes him. There is a spark, as it were, of spiritual life in every one of us, as there is a spark of electricity in every drop of water and in every grain of sand. Electricity in matter is often used to represent spirituality in mind. So each of us is confronted with these two facts—the fact of relationship to others, making our life a continuation of their life, and the fact of each of us having a distinct personality. Now, this relation

to others, from which we can not free ourselves, shows that the good in us and the evil in us are not entirely our own, and that no man can be judged simply as an individual. It is not our own until we adopt it as our own. Related all around as we are, we can see that Paul announces a universal law of life when he says, "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Every man is related all around. Is it not clear that no good man lives to himself? The very idea of goodness implies unselfishness, kindness, sympathy. When a man with whole-hearted sincerity cooperates with God, or, as Paul says, "lives unto the Lord," then we see that he is not living to himself. And yet if we look into the matter sufficiently close we shall find that there is a sense in which a man is never so much living to himself or for his own interests as when he is voluntarily living to God. The laws of the universe are such that benevolence ultimately hangs up by the neck the man whose selfishness has blinded his eyes to the fact that he has been occupying himself all his life, like Haman of old, building a gallows

for his own disaster, for living to himself is forever an impossible task. In some degree or other every man is multiplying himself; his character does not remain at home, but it travels abroad.

These are solemn facts. Dr. Chalmers, the great Scotch preacher, once said that every man is a missionary now and forever, for good or for evil, whether he intends it or designs it or not. He may be a blot radiating his dark influence to the very circumference of society; or he may be a blessing, spreading benediction over the length and breadth of the world; but a blank he can not be. There are no moral blanks. There are no neutral characters. We are either the sower that sows, or the light that splendidly illuminates, or the salt that silently operates; dead or alive, every man speaks.

II

This study of influence must certainly make sin look more terrible to us than when we think of it only as a personal matter, for no man can tell how far his sin may

spread in its deadly influence. A while ago scientific men made investigations into the cause of a contagious disease which had spread over the city of Moscow. It turned out that a young man had been stealing gold-fish, which he put in a little tank in the floor of his room, covered with the boards, to keep until he could sell them in another place. Soon after the great contagion sprang up in that vicinity—indeed, in that very room. It began with him at first, and he was left crippled and blind, and went limping along on crutches, a suffering, permanent invalid. The contagion spread to others, and upon examination made by scientific men from Warsaw and Berlin they found that these fish had died in the tank, and that they were of such a nature as to spread at once a contagion which became of a most malignant type. A scourge overspread the land and carried away tens of thousands of innocent people. Sin is like that. Every act of evil deposited in a heart given over to disobedience to God breeds a miasma, the fumes of which go out unseen on the silent air, poisoning the life of others.

III

There is another thought that ought to give us pause in the study of this theme, and that is that when we sin against God we are most likely to bring hurt to the people that are dearest to us. The stranger or the people who do not care for us, and for whom we do not care, are likely to be the least influenced by our conduct. But those whom we love and for whose happiness we have great desire, and the people who tenderly love us, they are the people who will be the most quickly damaged and harmed by our sin. Eve could not sin alone. She immediately afterward became a tempter to her husband. And so when we sin, the one we love is likely to be the most harmed by our sin. And surely it was a terrible thing that Eve, having been tempted and deceived by Satan, should immediately become herself a Satan to work ruin to him whom she loved best. Henry Ward Beecher brings out this truth very clearly in a sermon on the murder of John the Baptist by Herod, which was brought about against the judgment and desire of Herod under the

influence of his wife Herodias. When Herod ensnared his brother's wife, when he tempted her into adulterous abandonment of her husband and into unlawful fellowship with him, he was the aggressor and she was the partner; but when they were living in unholy concord she became the avenger, and her influence upon him led him into the infamous crime of John's murder. He destroyed her virtue, and she destroyed his manhood; and from that time to this how many have been destroyed by those who should have been their protectors, and who should have inspired in them purity and gentleness and forgiveness! Oh, what chance was there for sweet and wholesome water to come out of such fountains! But they rotted together and spoiled each other. How many times, if we could look into the secrets of the household, should we see the same work going on: a bad man lowering the tone of the woman that came to him pure and simple-minded, destroying her aspirations, familiarizing her with vulgarity, urging all his influence and power to take away from her the fear of evil and wrong, and rather rejoicing as every barrier is broken down to bring her to

his level! And how many men have been despoiled by hard, selfish, and ambitious wives, the man being simple-minded, and on the whole having right notions, and the woman perpetually employing the subtle arts of influence, persuasion, and fascination, and all of them in the direction of selfishness, and often in the direction of corruption and malignant crime.

There is in all this a tremendous message for us. We can not sin against God without poisoning the very streams of our affection, so that our very love will have in it a touch of death and disaster to those that come under its influence. And sometimes the pleasant sins of selfishness and worldly indifference to sacred things work the greatest destruction to those whom we love.

When Dr. Wilbur Chapman was conducting a mission in an Eastern city, a young man came to him one day at the close of the service and said: "You talk about a mother. Whenever you speak of your mother my heart aches, and I get into a rebellious spirit. My mother has never told me that she loved me. My mother has never invited me to

become a Christian. My mother is a social queen and a rich woman in this city. I would be ashamed to say it publicly, but, sir, some day you ought to preach a sermon to the boys and girls who have had no true mothers." Is there any mother here who would like to have her boy talk like that? But, how about it? Are you giving him to understand that his mother by example, and prayer, and love, cares more for his goodness and his purity of soul than anything else? Remember that your selfishness and your worldliness and indifference to God and Christ as a father or a mother may be the poison of hell to the children who are dearer to you than your own life.

Once, during the Civil War, after a great battle, a chaplain going about among the wounded in the hospital stopt beside the bed of a young fellow and said: "Can I do anything for you?" The boy said: "Yes, chaplain, pray for me." And the chaplain thought that he was to pray that the young fellow might be ready to die, but when he started in that way, the boy broke in on the prayer, saying: "Chaplain, just be thankful for me. First of all, thank God

for my mother. Thank Him that she ever gave me birth. Thank Him that when I came into the world she wet my face with her kisses; that when I could not walk alone she held me; that when I grew to young manhood she steadied me. Thank Him that I have a Savior. Thank Him that the gates of heaven are open. Thank Him that I am going home." Who would not like to be worthy to be a mother whose influence should produce a boy like that, and give to him a benediction such as that mother bestowed upon her son? Thank God! Many men grown gray could gladly join with the poet who sings:

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me"—
  Mother sang it long ago,
Sang it low and soothingly,
  Rocking in the afterglow.
Sang it to me as I slept
  In my snowy trundle-bed,
As the lengthening shadows crept
Eerie like about her head.

"Let me hide myself in Thee"—
  Still I hear it echo there,
As she sang it o'er to me,
  From her swaying rocking-chair;

And I am a boy again,
As so sweetly back along
Distant years I catch the strain
Of that old familiar song.

"Other refuge have I none"—
Often in the long, long years
I have missed the touch of one
Who could soothe my doubts and fears,
One to whom I used to go
With each boyish grief and care.
Sometimes in the afterglow,
I catch glimpses of her there.

"Rock of Ages"—and I feel
Mother's arms about me prest,
As to her embrace I'd steal
To be rocked away to rest.
Dreamy-like once more I hear
Softly, gently, soothingly,
That faint echo in my ear:
"Let me hide myself in Thee."

THE DAWN OF GUILT

"The eyes of them both were opened and they knew that they were naked."—Gen. 3:7.

SOME time ago passers-by in the streets of Paris were attracted by the figure of a woman on the parapet of a roof. She had fallen asleep in the afternoon, and under the influence of somnambulism had stept out of an open window on to the edge of the house. There she was walking to and fro, to the horror of the gazers below, who expected every moment to witness a false step and terrible fall. They dared not shout, lest by awaking her suddenly they should be only hastening the inevitable calamity. But this came soon enough; for moving, as somnambulists do, with eyes open, the reflection of a lamp lit in an opposite window by an artizan engaged in some mechanical operation, all unconscious of what was going on outside, aroused her from sleep. The moment her eyes were opened to discover the perilous position in which she had placed herself, she

tottered, fell, and was dashed below. So, Joseph Parker says, temptation blinds us, but guilt opens our eyes; temptation is night, guilt is morning. In guilt we see ourselves, we see our hideousness, we see our baseness, we see hell! "Their eyes were opened," and they saw that their character was gone! You can throw away a character in one act as you throw away a stone, but you can not go after it and recover it in the same way. You may get it back again by penitence and strife, but it is something different even then. A stone that is thrown along the road you may recover, but a stone thrown at night into the sea who can get back again?

I

Even with all our knowledge of sin in ourselves and in the men and women whom we know, it is hard for us to appreciate what the dawn of guilt must have meant amid the innocence and beauty and perfect joy and peace which reigned in the Garden of God. It is hard for us to appreciate the transformation which changed all the forces of the

soul from instruments that give pleasure to powers that can punish.

Watkinson quotes one of our American naturalists as saying that the human brain is full of birds. The song-birds might have all been hatched in the human heart, so well do they express the whole gamut of human passion and emotion in their varied songs. The plaintive singers, the soaring, ecstatic singers, the gushing singers, the inarticulate singers—robin, dove, lark, thrush, mocking-bird, nightingale — all are expressive of human emotions, desire, love, sadness, aspirations, glee. Very beautiful, indeed, is it to find our brain full of sweet minstrels of the air; but, alas! when guilt dawned on the human soul as the result of disobedience to God and the yielding to temptation to evil, the mysterious and marvelous human soul was so changed that it became the nesting-place of a far different sort of birds. Jesus Christ, who knew what was in man, and who, loving man better than any one else, still saw what sin had wrought there, gives us a view of a sinful heart, showing it to be the hold of every foul spirit and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

Fierce hawk, croaking raven, ravenous vulture, obscene birds, birds of discord, birds of darkness, birds of tempest, birds of blood and death—these are all typical of the heart's base passions; these all brood and nestle within and fly forth to darken and pollute and destroy.

II

Our theme shows us clearly that the dawn of guilt means the awakening in the sinning soul of a sense of shame and loss of self-respect. And that is a characteristic of sin. No man ever consciously sins against God without a feeling that he is tarnished, he is damaged, he is in some sense unclean, he has lost the true manhood, the nobility of his self-respect. A man told me that once in a Boston hotel several men who were casual acquaintances met in the lobby, and during the conversation one man invited the others into the barroom to drink with him. Among these men there was one with his little boy, and he begged to be excused until he went to his room and left the boy. Being a little

curious about it, the man who related the incident asked him why he did that, and the other man blushed and showed a good deal of consciousness of shame when he said that he did not care to have his little boy see him drink at the bar. It is easy to see that that man's eyes were opened to regard himself as a damaged man. A sense of shame made him uncomfortable. Right there is one of the points where Satan is always deceiving young men and young women. The devil tries to make men believe that careful obedience to God is a sort of slavery and that in personal liberty, the doing what we please without regard to the Bible or our own conscience on the subject, is in some sense fine and splendid, quite superior in a way; but the realization is very different. When the deceived soul has broken away from God and taken its own course, it soon finds that sin shames and degrades and despoils us of the finest sense of courage and confidence. I have been reading recently a story of a man who has been in Africa hunting lions, who tells of the terrible disappointment the experience was to him. He thought a lion was a terrible beast, coura-

geous, magnificent, and all that. But his first lion opened his eyes and the sight was immensely disappointing. It shambled along with head down and nothing majestic about it. That skulking beast, gray-yellow in hue, almost maneless, stealing shamefacedly along like an unwieldy cat, was that the monarch of the forest? The average lion of the menagerie has twice his grandeur and three times his growth of mane; such, the hunter meditated, is the effect of regular and generous feeding. Sin is always a skulking, vicious thing. The devil often deludes the young into viewing a sinful life as full of something fascinating and heroic, but sin has been a skulker and a vagabond from the beginning.

III

Our theme brings out with terrible clearness the premonition of disaster and the dread of God which guilt brings upon the soul. Adam and Eve had basked in the smile of God. They had conversed with God as with a dear friend. His perfect love was their supreme joy. But as soon as they yield

to temptation and break His commandment, the dawn of guilt brings sunset on the joyous day of their innocence, and they shiver and shrink away from the presence of God. Heretofore they have rejoiced in the presence of their Heavenly Father, now they are afraid and they dread and flee from Him. Something like that is forever happening when we yield ourselves to sin. Reginald Campbell paints a graphic picture of this mysterious but tremendously real consciousness of sin: Here is a man who started life high in the social scale. He has come down, he has flung away his opportunities, he has forfeited the regard of his friends, maybe he has broken his mother's heart and brought down his father's gray hairs in sorrow to the grave. We have all known many such. Mark him as he sits near you, shabbily drest, unkempt, hopeless-looking, the flash of his eye dimmed, his manhood gone. If you were to talk to him about sin in ordinary religious language, he would be angry and impatient; but if you tell him he has made his bed and must lie on it, he will bow his head in shame, for he knows that it is true.

Close by him sits another. You pitied the poor unfortunate, but here is more cause for pity. He is cursed with success, because the foundation of that success was laid in falsehood. Years ago he got his first opportunity by telling a black lie. He has succeeded; but if he could put the clock back and cancel that lie there are times when he would gladly give up all his success. But he can not; other people are concerned beside himself, and to publish to the world what he is and what he was would be useless now. He has nothing to do with religion, for he will not play the hypocrite. But his remorse is eating out his heart.

Here is another case—a man who fights with an evil propensity the very existence of which is a humiliation. He won a victory this morning, but he knows that to-morrow the fight will have to be fought all over again. He is wrestling with a demon, the existence of which it may be few, if any, of his close friends suspect. Oh! pity the man with a vile secret sin. His despairing cry of agony rises up—"Is there no help for such as I?" We may sympathize, but without the experience we never can really

know the sorrow of a man like that. Washington Allston spent more than twelve years attempting to paint the chief scene of Belshazzar's feast, and then left the work unfinished. It is said that the chief difficulty which the artist's genius could not overcome was that of depicting the despair of the doomed king. Well it might be so, for it was the despair of a lost soul brought suddenly face to face with the retributive judgment of God, written by a mysterious hand from another world. What art can portray it in the look of a human face? That picture now hangs in the Art Museum in Boston. Its unfinished condition is perhaps the strongest testimony to the terror of a guilty conscience. Lord Byron, who came at last through his own sinful heart to have a kindred feeling, saw the picture in his poetic vision:

The king was on his throne,
  The satraps thronged the hall,
A thousand bright lamps shone
  O'er that high festival.
A thousand cups of gold,
  In Judah deemed divine—
Jehovah's vessels hold
  The godless heathen's wine.

In that same hour and hall,
The fingers of a hand
Came forth against the wall,
And wrote as if on sand:
The fingers of a man;—
A solitary hand
Along the letters ran,
And traced them like a wand.

The monarch saw, and shook,
And bade no more rejoice;
All bloodless waxed his look,
And tremulous his voice.
"Let the men of lore appear,
The wisest of the earth,
And expound the words of fear,
Which mar our royal mirth."

Chaldea's seers are good,
But here they have no skill;
And the unknown letters stood
Untold and awful still.
And Babel's men of age
Are wise and deep in lore;
But now they were not sage,
They saw—but knew no more.

A captive in the land,
A stranger and a youth,
He heard the king's command,
He saw that writing's truth.

The lamps around were bright,
  The prophecy in view;
He read it on that night,—
  The morrow proved it true.

Belshazzar's grave is made,
  His kingdom passed away,
He, in the balance weighed,
  Is light and worthless clay.
The shroud his robe of state,
  His canopy the stone;
The Mede is at his gate!
  The Persian on his throne!

Sin uncleansed from the heart and the life must always bring about a sad doom. But it is the glory of our Christianity that it has the power to cleanse the heart of the poison of guilt, to take the sting of sin out of the soul, and bring man back again into harmony and peace with God. Oh! the gentleness and the patience of God, who follows after us in our sins with infinite loving kindness to reclaim us from our lost estate!

Some years ago the wife of a noble-hearted business man in Chicago became insane, and yet this man loved his wife as never before and gave up his business that he might give

her tender care. The neighbors complained of her shrieking and he moved to a new neighborhood, built a large house, put a great fence about it, only to have other complaints come to him, which, of course, he could not heed, for his wife whom he loved was under his own care. One day the physician suggested to him that he take her to the mountains where she was born. Possibly the mountain scenery, the music of the birds, and the sight of the flowers she used to love would bring back again her old mental power. The journey was made, but with disappointing results, and the broken-hearted husband set his face toward Chicago without his cherished desire being granted him. But when they reached their city home the wife fell asleep. Sitting by her bedside he scarcely stirred for fear he would arouse her, for she had had no natural sleep for months. She slept on and on, and all night long he sat there by her side, thanking God for the sleep that had come to her and hoping against hope that it was an omen of happier days. As the sun rose in the morning she opened her eyes to look with clear vision into her husband's face and

say, "Where have I been all this time?" And he said, "You have been away on a journey, but now you have returned to me." "And where have you been all this time?" she asked, and his answer, made with sobs, was, "I have been sitting by your side waiting, and now you have returned to me." And yet even that, beautiful and noble as it is, is but a poor picture of the infinite God waiting by the sinner's side through all his days and nights of guilt and transgression, seeking to woo him while he waits. Are there not some who hear me for whom God has been thus waiting, who will open your eyes and see your Lord, and then in memory of all His patience and loving kindness say with David, "Thy gentleness hath made me great"?

USELESS COVERING FOR SIN

"They sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves aprons."—Gen. 3:7.

THESE fig-leaf garments which Adam and Eve sewed together in the Garden of Eden, which had suddenly lost its sense of peace and security, are expressive of the vivid and horrible transformation from innocence to guilt in a soul which has yielded to evil. A consciousness of nakedness, a desire to cover up that which would shame and disgrace us, is one of the first results of sin. Some one has said that there is no man who would not rather die than that all which he knows of himself should be known to the world. It is the want of a covering which we so deeply and thoroughly feel. So that when we turn for sympathy to each other, our language conceals as much as it expresses; and when we turn to God, our prayers immediately take the form of confession, tho it be but to confess what we know that He knows; yet it is expressive of a burden which we feel, and which we most of all wish to get rid of; and in turning

to Him, our feeling is, "Thou art a place to hide me in": "Thou shalt hide me by thine own presence." Did the Psalmist mean to be hidden from other men? Perhaps that thought was in it also, but the chief thought was that he might be hidden from himself, that his sin might be covered. The Savior in His message to the churches as given to John says to one of them, "Thou sayest, I am rich, and knowest not that thou art poor and miserable and blind and naked." That which makes the chief dread of death is the thought that all our disguises will be stript from us and we shall go naked into the land of spirits. Paul says, "For in this, our earthly house, we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon"; "If so be that, being clothed, we shall not be found naked." The glory of the redeemed is to be "clothed in white raiment before the throne," and to "walk with Christ in white."

I

We are so made that by the very character of our creation it is impossible for us to securely cover our own sins. Take the

power of the human memory. While it enriches us, it carries with it also all the elements necessary for the sinner's bitter despair. Walt Whitman once wrote a little poem entitled, "The Dome of Pictures," in which he said:

In a little house keep I pictures suspended; it is not a fixt little house,
It is round, it is only a few inches from one side to the other;
Yet behold, it has room for all the shows of the world, all memories!
Here the tableaux of life, and here the groupings of death.

Meditating on this thought of Whitman's, Sam Walter Foss has taken it for a text, and written a song helpful for its practical suggestion:

Ah, each man bears his Dome of Dreams—
A picture dome
Whereon are painted homely cares,
Defeats and triumphs and despairs;
A gallery thronged with wider themes
Than those of Rome.

The pictures on this Dome of Dreams
Are memories.
Young Barefoot wandering through the dew,
Through daisied fields when life was new,
By woodland paths, by lilied streams
And blossomed trees.

The picture of a maid at school
With floating hair;
Transfigured in the mist is she
On that dim shore of memory,
Life's dewiness about her, cool
And pure and fair.

The picture of a road that leads
From an old home:
A boy that from a wooded swell
Looks through his tears and waves farewell—
Then down through unknown hills and meads
Afar to roam.

The pictures of the long, long way
He traveled far;
Fair fruited hillsides slanting south,
Baked herbless uplands smit with drouth,
And night paths with no gleam of day—
Without a star.

And pictures of wide-sleeping vales
And storm-tossed waves;
Of valleys bathed in noonday peace,
Of sheltered harbors of release,
Blue inlets specked with sunlit sails;
Of open graves.

And pictures of fair islands set
In golden foam;
And pictures of black wrecks upcast
On barren crags by many a blast—
But on! Life paints more pictures yet
Upon that dome.

The quality of the human soul is such that when we commit sin it is not something outside of us; it becomes a picture in our own memory; it becomes a part of ourselves, and no man can tell when his sin will discover itself and give him up to justice. Men shut their teeth together and say that their past evil deeds never shall be known, but they fail to reckon on the self-discovering power of sin. All peoples, in all ages, have had proverbs and legends which tell of this universal fact. "The Cranes of Ibycus" have long since passed into a proverbial expression, and the old story is full of suggestion. The story is that Ibycus, a famous

Grecian poet, was going to Corinth. Robbers attacked and murdered him. As he was falling and dying he looked around to see if there were no witnesses or avengers. All he could see was a flock of cranes high in the air. With his last strength the dying poet called on the cranes to avenge his blood. The robbers were greatly amused at it, and jested and laughed at what they thought was an idle call. They got their prey, and came to Corinth. They went to the open theater. As they sat there, they looked up, and saw above them a flight of cranes, and one scoffingly said, "Lo, there are the avengers of Ibycus," and they all laughed heartlessly. The words were overheard by a man sitting near them. Already fears of the poet's safety began to be common. The gang was arrested, and on being questioned, betrayed themselves, and were put to death. So, "The Cranes of Ibycus" became a proverb.

But it is not needed that even "The Cranes of Ibycus" should give witness to make sure that a man's sins will find him out. Every sinner carries in his own heart and in his own mind that which will discover him to judgment. We think the kineto-

scope a wonderful invention, but God has His kinetoscope in every man's memory. We may think we have forgotten some things, but we have not. When we shall stand in the clear light of eternity, all the negatives stored away in the great storehouse of the human soul will be easily developed. Some men seem to think that there is some magical change in the fact of death to separate a man from his sins, but there is no such teaching in God's Word, and it is utterly false and contrary to all true human reasoning. Shakespeare, the great student of human nature, brings out very clearly this solemn truth that the sinner carries the evidence to condemn him in his own heart. In "Richard III" he makes false Clarence say:

My dream was lengthened after life;
Oh, then began the tempest to my soul!
I passed, methought, the melancholy flood,
With that grim ferryman which poets write of
Unto the kingdom of perpetual night.
The first that there did greet my stranger soul,
Was my great father-in-law, renowned Warwick,
Who cried aloud—"What scourge for perjury
Can this dark monarchy afford false Clarence?"
And so he vanished: Then came wand'ring by

A shadow like an angel, with bright hair
Dabbled in blood; and he shrieked out aloud,
"Clarence is come—false, fleeting, perjured Clarence—
That stabb'd me in the field by Tewkesbury;
Seize on him, furies, take him to your torments!"
With that, methought, a legion of foul fiends
Environed me, and howléd in mine ears
Such hideous cries, that, with the very noise,
I trembling waked, and, for a season after,
Could not believe but that I was in hell;
Such terrible impression made my dream.

. . . . .

I have done these things
That now give evidence against my soul.

Again the great Shakespeare makes King Richard say:

My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain,
Perjury, perjury, in the highest degree;
Murder, stern murder, in the direst degree;
All several sins, all used in each degree,
Throng to the bar, crying all "Guilty!" "guilty!"
I shall despair. There is no creature loves me;
And if I die, no soul will pity me:
Nay, wherefore should they, since that I myself
Find in myself no pity to myself?
Methought the souls of all that I had murder'd
Came to my tent, and every one did threat
To-morrow's vengeance on the head of Richard.

Some men think they will be able to escape from their sins, and from the remorse for them, by engrossing themselves in business, and so filling the mind and heart with cares that there will be no time for thoughts of the past. Herod tried that after he had beheaded John the Baptist. But he failed. And as soon as the news came to him of the wonderful miracles which Jesus Christ was working, the terrible picture came back to Herod's imagination. Memory put him again at that dinner table where the young Herodias danced before him and the cruel hard-hearted guests sat about him. He sees again the courtesying young maiden as she calls upon him to make good his drunken promise to give her whatever she asks, as she demands the head of John the Baptist on a charger. He feels again the sinking of his coward heart as he gives commandment for the awful crime, and again he looks upon that pure stern face, that even in death seems to be his judge, as they bring the dead man's head into the dining-room. And so Herod, when he hears about Jesus, cries out, "It is John the Baptist whom I beheaded. He is risen from the dead!" No,

tho you are as busy as a king, you will not thus keep your sins covered.

Some think time will wear sin out and efface its memory. They have not thought of their sins for a long time, and they fancy therefore that their remorse, like a scorpion's sting, has been plucked out by the roots, and will never trouble them any more. The brethren of Joseph thought that. But on that memorable day in the palace of Pharaoh, when the prime minister's heart seemed turned against them, the sorrow of Joseph, the lad whom they had sold into slavery twenty years before, gleamed before their faces again, and made them tremble as they exclaimed one to another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother." Who had said anything about their brother? Ah, it did not need that anybody should say anything. The dust that had been gathering for twenty years was whisked away with one blast of harsh wind, and their sin which has been hidden all these years is uncovered and stands naked and glaring before God and man.

II

There is only one safe covering for sin, and that is to have it hidden under the forgiving love of Jesus Christ. It is not the man that hideth his sins that shall prosper, but he who confesses his sins and through faith in Jesus Christ finds pardon and forgiveness, he it is who leaves the dungeon behind him and goes forth to perfect freedom and peace.

A man in sin is like the man in the castle in that old story—bound—fettered—thick walls—bolts—waiting for execution. But one night, when he had fallen into a heavy sleep, a strange dream of home haunted him. He thought his mother had come to him. Starting up, he saw that there stood beside him a beauteous form, who said to him, "Make haste! Lift your hands that I may release them." And she took off the chains. She had beheld him when he knew nothing of it, and she knew his name, and love had brought her there. It was the castle-keeper's daughter. "Lift up your feet," she said, "that I may set you free." What he could not do for himself, love and

mercy were doing for him. "Now follow me silently." She led through passages where he never could have found his way alone. He breathed again the pure air of freedom and felt its cooling touch upon his cheek. Would not that liberated captive be a monster if his heart did not overflow with thanksgiving to her who had been his savior?

My friend, you are such a prisoner. Jesus is that loving one, seeking after you in your dungeon. When you did not know about it He was looking upon you, and down deep in your heart He has seen something worth loving, something worth saving, He beholds the man or the woman you may become; one fit to be lifted to the joy and glory of heaven. And so, with infinite love Christ has come, and He has unlocked your cell and stands over you with love-lit eyes and says: "I will be your Redeemer. I will be your Guide. I will lead you gently as a mother leads her child. I will put my arm between you and all evil. I am the Good Shepherd that giveth my life for the sheep. Come, follow me!"

THE COWARDICE OF A GUILTY CONSCIENCE

"The man and his wife hid themselves."—Gen. 3:8.

In no way does the tragedy of Eden come out with more picturesque realism than in these hiding figures fleeing from the face of the God against whom they have sinned. But yesterday the presence of God was their chief delight. It made the flowers more beautiful; it added to the fragrance of the blossoming trees; it gave more exquisite harmony to the singing of the birds; it was the perfection of their delight and their joy. Fear was not in all their thoughts and they gazed rapturously into the countenance of their Heavenly Father as a child gazes with unspeakable confidence and trust into the eyes of its mother. But now there is nothing they dread so much as the face of God. And we watch them as they haste into the thickest part of the garden and vainly try to hide themselves from the eye of their Creator.

I

Let us notice in our study of this picturesque and interesting theme that sin is primarily and supremely against God. Your sin may have wronged others; it may have harmed your father; it may have grieved your mother; it may have injured your brother, or your sister, or your neighbor; but your great transgression was against God. You do not make sin right again, nor heal its hurt, when you have obtained the forgiveness of some one else whom your sin has injured. Your sin will never cease to pursue you like a nemesis, nor to fill you with terror, until through penitence and appeal for mercy you have been forgiven of God. Here is where some make a great blunder. Sin is not simply a mistake, it is not simply bad form, it is not simply folly and unwisdom; it is a wrong against God; and no man can get rid of his sin till he has had sincere and genuine dealing with God, whom above all else his sin has wronged.

II

We can not fail to learn from our study that one of the first results of sin is to awaken the conscience and make it an accuser and pursuer. All great literature abounds in illustrations of this theme. No man deals with it with more wisdom and fidelity to life than Shakespeare. We have all had on our lips at one time or another those words of Hamlet in which he declares that "Conscience doth make cowards of us all." And in the tragedy of "King Richard III" Shakespeare makes a wicked man say of his conscience, "I'll not meddle with it: it is a dangerous thing: it makes a man a coward: a man can not steal, but it accuses him: he can not swear, but it checks him: . . . . . it is a blushing shamefast spirit that mutinies in a man's bosom; it fills one full of obstacles: it made me once restore a purse of gold, that I found; it beggars any man that keeps it; it is turned out of all towns and cities for a dangerous thing; and every man that means to live well endeavors to trust to himself and to live without it." And yet when

we look over toward the east and see those rich scoundrels who have been trying to live without it, and have been piling up their ill-gotten gains by municipal fraud, flying to the court-room and falling on their knees to make confession, hoping to escape the penitentiary, we are assured that to-day, as well as in the past, no man escapes the following of a guilty conscience by refusing to heed it and trying to live without it. There is one thing that can not permanently be bribed, and that is that court in a man's own bosom which we call conscience. And when men sin against God, conscience makes them cowards, and tho they may brave it out for a while, a detective is on the track who is sleepless in vigilance and relentless in determination.

Mr. Spurgeon tells of an Englishman who was so constantly in debt and so frequently arrested by the bailiffs that on one occasion, when going by a picket fence, the sleeve of his coat catching on one of the pickets, he turned around and said, obeying the instinctive fear of his heart, "I don't owe you anything, sir." He thought the picket was a bailiff. So the man who

sins against God, unless it be forgiven, must come to the time when his sin will make of his conscience a terrible persecutor. And no man has been able to hide from God. Adam and Eve failed. Cain failed. Judas failed. Every sinner fails. It was said of the Roman Empire under the Cæsars that the whole world was only one great prison for Cæsar, for if any man offended the emperor it was impossible for him to escape. If he crossed the Alps, Cæsar could search him out in Gaul; if he sought to hide himself in the Indies, even the swarthy monarchs there knew the power of the Roman arm, so they could give no shelter to a man who had incurred imperial vengeance. And yet, perhaps, a fugitive from Rome might have prolonged his miserable life by hiding in the dens and caves of the earth, but all the worlds belong to God and no sinner can hide from Him.

Professor Phelps tells of a burglar who rifled an unoccupied house by the seaside. He ransacked the rooms and heaped his plunder in the parlor. There were evidences that here he sat down to rest. On a bracket in the corner stood a marble bust

of Guido's "Ecce Homo"—Christ crowned with thorns. The guilty man had taken it in his hands and examined it. It bore the marks of his dirty fingers; but he replaced it with its face turned to the wall, as if he would not have even the sightless eyes of the marble Savior look upon his deeds of infamy. But all such efforts to hide from God are a failure.

III

Our study ought to teach us by contrast that while a guilty conscience is the source of cowardice and fear and terror and a sure guarantee of a sorrowful and wretched life, on the other hand there is no source of peace within our reach so pure as a quiet conscience. Shakespeare, whom we were quoting a moment ago, in "King Henry VIII," makes Cardinal Wolsey say to Cromwell, who asks him how he is:

> Never so truly happy, my good Cromwell.
> I know myself now; and I feel within me
> A peace above all earthly dignities,
> A still and quiet conscience.

But how can a poor sinner accomplish the cure of his fear and shame and get victory over the sin that makes a coward of him? My friends, the whole Bible is given to answer that question. The sinner must in some way come into fellowship with Jesus Christ. My friend, Prof. C. M. Coburn, relates a very wonderful incident of travel told by Julian Hawthorne. The novelist was traveling in Wales, accompanied by a friend, a Harvard student, who had a periodical passion for strong drink. One day they were standing together watching some women with their little children gathering herbs at the foot of a great cliff. They filled the basket with these herbs, and the fathers, away up at the top of the cliff, by means of a rope, would draw the baskets up. Suddenly, as they watched, the Harvard student said: "The passion for drink is on me again." Mr. Hawthorne, noting a narrow pathway running almost up the face of the cliff, said, "Run up that quickly. You will forget it." When he had gotten fairly started, a little girl, noting him, started after him, when she stumbled and fell, and fortunately fell into one of the

baskets. The father, feeling the tug upon the rope, thought the basket filled and started to draw it up. The child became frightened, and as the basket was drawn up rapidly attempted to climb out. It would have been sure death, when Julian Hawthorne, with his hands to his mouth, shouted to his friend: "Spring out and catch the rope. Let yourself down. Save the child." The trained athlete balanced himself a moment and sprang out; let himself down hand by hand, and saved the child. And the passion for drink never returned to him. My friend Coburn thinks it was because of the great principle of sacrifice getting into his life. Certain it is that a guilty conscience can only be cured through the forgiveness of God in Jesus Christ, and it is only when we get into fellowship with Him that we may find peace.

A dissipated wreck of a man came up to a preacher one day in an open-air service in a great city and said, "Gov'nor, you told us to be good. Look at me. Can I be good?"

The minister looked at him—and finally said, "Do you want to know the truth?"

"Yes," he said, "let's have the honest truth."

"Then," said the minister, "I think you are the worst specimen of humanity I ever saw. You are soaked in drink. Sin has marked your very flesh. I give you up. I honestly don't think you can be good. But I did not ask you to be good in your own strength. I asked you to let the Lord take your case in hand. He will rinse your mouth and cleanse your heart and sweeten your body and make a saint of you."

The poor sinner looked back at him and said, "Do you mean it?"

The preacher said, "I mean it."

And the man began then and there to enter into fellowship with Christ and to escape from the thraldom of his sin and the persecution of a guilty conscience.

My friend, do not thrust these illustrations aside as of no account to you because your particular sins have not taken on such a hideous type. They are just as hideous to God and they grieve His heart as truly as did the sins of the poor drunkard. For you, as well as for the man whose sins

are publicly shaming him, there can be real peace only in the consciousness of a divine fellowship with the Savior.

A little boy came home one day, having been in a fight. The father inquired into it and found that he had been imposed upon and had fought in self-defense against a boy much bigger than himself. He asked, "Were you frightened, Arthur?" He said, "No." The father said, "You ought to have been. The boy was bigger than you." "I wasn't, dad," he replied. "You see, Norman [his big brother] was only just around the corner." It is a grand thing to have a big brother in reserve. Oh, my dear friends, reverently, lovingly, let me assure you that the weakest and frailest and most discouraged of sinful men and women who will turn their faces toward righteousness and seek to make battle against their sins may be sure that our Elder Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, will be not round the corner, but in our very hearts, to give us strength and victory.

I doubt not there are some here conscious of sin and needing above everything in the world to feel the presence of Jesus

Christ and His power and willingness to redeem from the guilty conscience that pursues and will give no peace. In "John Inglesant," Maltvoli, the wicked prisoner, is in his cell, waiting for Justice, with her scales and sword, to write finis at the end of the chapter. Suddenly in his dream he sees a bright form looking down upon him with eyes full of love. He hears the words: "What doest thou here? I bought thee in the garden. I won thee upon the cross. Thou wast mine with me when the tomb burst." And Christ stretched out His hands of pleading love. Maltvoli sprang up to weep and beat upon his breast and pray and cry: "He calls me. He loves me," and in that tremendous moment of divine vision he shouted to his sins: "Oh, let me go!" And lo, the sins which had made him a slave and a criminal melted like fetters of ice, and the prisoner was free.

My friend, I do not know your sin. It may be the people that are nearest to you in your daily life do not dream of your sin. But God knows, and your conscience, His spokesman within your breast in His efforts to save you, will not let you forget

it. Let me call you to this vision of Jesus Christ, who died on Calvary to redeem you and save you, that you may, even in this hour, yes, even in this moment, yield your heart to Him and be forgiven.

THE CALL OF GOD

"God called unto the man and said unto him, Where art thou?"—Gen. 3:9.

THE writer of this story of the childhood of man says that it was "in the cool of the evening" that God came walking in the garden and speaking to the man who had sinned. Evening is the time for reflection. Many things look different in the quiet evening hour when we sit down to think them over than they did in the glare of the noonday, with the telephone ringing in our ears and the din and dust of the street rising up to the open window. There are things that seem right enough in the bustle and competition and struggle of the exchange and market-place which take on a different look when in the cool of the evening we sit down to reflect. We may sin during the day, but let us not lose out of sight the fact that God will call us to account at night. The heat and stress of life soon passes, and there comes the cool

of the evening of old age to every one of us, when peace can only be ours because we have nothing to hide from God.

I

The first message that speaks out to us from this theme in tones that we can not fail to hear and understand is the stupendous fact that God speaks to men. The Bible is full of the record of the voice of God. It is the great phonograph of the ages, and we turn over the record and hear the august voice which gives us pause. God speaks to men under varying conditions and circumstances. He spoke to Cain when the bitterness of his envy and jealousy like a wild beast crouched at the door of his soul. He spoke in warning, but in vain. God spoke to Noah and told him of the impending deluge and gave him the message concerning the ark that was to save the race from total disaster, and Noah hearkened and found his salvation. Again and again God spoke to Abraham in the desert tent, on the mountain top, and in the plain, and

Abraham was so loyal that he became known as the "friend of God." He spoke to Jacob flying into exile because of his sins and revealed to his astonished gaze the heavenly stairway with its angels passing to and fro between the earth and the sky. God spoke to Moses in the burning bush on the slopes of Mount Horeb and again and again through the forty years of his career in the wilderness. He spoke to Job out of the whirlwind. He spoke to Elijah in the mountain cave and called him back to courage from the depths of despair. He spoke to Saul on the way to Damascus and transformed him into Paul, the apostle. And God has not ceased to speak to men. He is forever speaking to the souls of men when they look into the sunset at the cool of the day.

If we would hear the voice of God we must be alert, with souls sensitive to His tones. He does not always speak through the voice of a white-robed angel. Often He speaks from the lips of a good man or a good woman, sometimes from the very poor and humble, and not infrequently from the lips of a little child. If we would never

fail to hear Him, we must be looking for the divine in every human being we meet. A friend put into my hand not long ago a poem which brings out our theme very beautifully:

They said, "The Master is coming
To honor the town to-day,
And none can tell what house or home
He may choose wherein to stay."
Then straight I turned to toiling,
To make my home more neat,
I swept, and polished, and garnished,
And decked it with blossoms sweet.

But right in the midst of my duties
A woman came to my door;
She had come to tell me her sorrow,
And my comfort and aid to implore.
And I said, "I can not listen,
Nor help you any to-day,
I have greater things to attend to,"
So the pleader turned away.

But soon there came another—
A cripple, thin, pale and gray—
And said, "O let me stop and rest
Awhile in your home, I pray."

I said, "I am grieved and sorry,
But I can not keep you to-day;
I look for a great and noble guest,"
And the cripple went away.
And the day wore onward swiftly,
And my task was nearly done,
And a prayer was ever in my heart
That the Master to me might come.

I thought I would spring to meet Him,
And treat Him with utmost care,
When a little child stood by me,
With a face so sweet and fair—
Sweet, but with marks of tear-drops—
And his clothes were tattered and old;
A finger was bruised and bleeding,
And his little bare feet were cold.

And I said, "I am sorry for you;
You are sorely in need of care,
But I can not stop to give it;
You must hasten other where."
And at the words a shadow
Swept o'er his blue-veined brow,
"Some one will feed and clothe you, dear,
But I am too busy now."

At last the day was ended,
And my toil was over and done;
My house was swept and garnished,
And I watched in the dusk alone,

I waited till night had deepened,
And the Master had not come;
"He has entered some other door," I cried,
"And gladdened some other home."

Then the Master stood before me,
And His face was grave and fair:
"Three times to-day I came to your door,
And craved your pity and care.
Three times you sent Me onward,
Unhelped and uncomforted;
And the blessing you might have had was lost,
And your chance to serve had fled."

"O Lord, dear Lord, forgive me;
How could I know it was Thee?"
My very soul was shamed and bowed
In the depths of humility.
And He said, "The sin is pardoned,
But the blessing is lost to thee,
For, failing to comfort the least of Mine,
You have failed to comfort Me."

II

We have also here the most gracious and beautiful thought in all the Bible, that God is calling to the man who has sinned. Speaking after the manner of men, with the selfishness of the world, we would not be

astonished to hear Adam calling after God for pardon and forgiveness, but we would marvel if we had not become so accustomed to the thought of God's loving kindness to us through Jesus Christ to hear God calling after man, the sinner, not in words of wrath, but speaking to him in the quiet of the evening, speaking to the depths of his soul to awaken repentance and win him back from his folly. All that was necessary to let Adam and Eve die out of the earth, poor melancholy failures, was but to let them alone. But in His infinite love God does not let man alone. That would be irretrievable ruin. He seeks him out and speaks to him and calls him to account, that there may be the possibility of his salvation. You may always depend upon it that anywhere in this world there are two seekers after every sinner. The Old Testament speaks a universal truth when it says, "Be sure your sin will find you out." There is a detective always on the track of unforgiven sin, sure to ferret it out and bring about the sinner's overthrow, and there would be no hope for any sinner in the world if it were not also true that there is another seeker after the

sinner. Jesus Christ said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." And when the conscience smarts and condemns until men flee to hide themselves, it is a part of the love and the mercy of God to make the path of the transgressor thorny and hard in order that man may be won from the path because of its terror and unhappiness and find refuge in the arms of his Savior.

Sometimes God calls men in the tenderest tones, tones as gentle as a whisper and as tender as a tear. One evening, in a service in New York City, Dr. Wilbur Chapman saw a very distinguished-looking man rise and say, "I will accept Christ." Dr. Chapman went back to the hotel and told his wife that he believed he had been used by Christ to lead a great man to God. He thought he had; but the next day, at the prayer-meeting in the afternoon, he saw this man come into the service carrying in his arms a little lame boy. He brought him forward and sat him on the platform. Then he came over to Dr. Chapman, and, placing his hand up to his mouth so that the child could not hear him, he said, "I want to

introduce to you my little Joe; he is going to die." He did not need to have told that, the little fellow's face was so white and his hands were so thin. When the minister went over to where the child was, with all the pride of a father the gentleman said, "This is Joe; he led me to Christ." Then he told his story. He said, "When the mission started, Joe said to me, 'Father, I can not go, but mother will take you; and all the time you are gone I will pray.' I never came into the house at night that I did not hear the thud of his little crutch on the floor as he came to welcome me the moment the door was opened. He would spring into my arms and say, 'Did you come?' But last night he did not ask me. I heard him coming to the door, and as it was opened he sprang into my arms and buried his face on my shoulder and I heard him say, with a sob, 'You have come, you have come; I know you have.'" My friend, is the voice of God coming to you in some tender way like that? Does it speak in the gentle tones of a mother, in the kindly voice of a father, in the pleading of a loving wife, or the manly regard of some true-

hearted friend? In whatever loving way God's voice is making itself heard in your heart, it is the greatest privilege of your life to heed that divine call.

III

I think we should learn from our study that the success of our Christian life, the noblest triumph of our personality, must come from keeping ourselves ever ready to hear and heed the voice of God. Whether our path be humble and restricted by narrow limitations, or whether it be along the high places of far-reaching influence, the voice of God must mean to us the supreme guidance of our lives. And if we live humbly and faithfully before God, we shall not fail to know the voice of our Heavenly Father in the plain and simple duties of every-day life. Whatever is revealed to us as our duty to do, that we may take to be the voice of God to us, and there is no way in which we can show our love and our fidelity to God so surely as in loyally doing our duty. We often think that if we

could do something heroic and romantic to show our gratitude and love for God, it would be a beautiful thing; but, my dear friend, heroism and romance do not depend upon quantity, but upon quality. It does not depend upon the size of the canvas, but upon the spirit of the artist. And the humblest surroundings may be made glorious with romantic heroism if there be there the spirit of loving fidelity to God. Henry Van Dyke in one of his greatest poems tells how,

At a certain hour, before the throne,
The youngest angel, Asmiel, stood alone.
"Lord, in the city Lupon I have found
Three servants of thy holy name, renowned
Above their fellows.
But, Lord, I fain would know, which loves
Thee best?"

Then spake the Lord of angels, to whose look
The hearts of all are like an open book.
"Thou shalt go to Lupon, to the three
Who serve Me there, and take this word from Me;
Tell each of them his Master bids him go
Alone to Spiran's huts, across the snow;
There he shall find a certain task for Me,
But what, I do not tell to them nor thee."

First to the temple door he made his way.
Through the aisles that hushed behind him, Bernol came.
One moment at the pulpit steps he knelt
In silent prayer, and on his shoulder felt
The angel's hand: "The Master bids thee go
Alone to Spiran's huts, across the snow,
To serve Him there." Then Bernol's hidden face
Went white as death, and for about the space
Of ten slow heart-beats there was no reply;
Till Bernol looked around and whispered,
"Why?"

Within the humble house where Malvin spent
His studious years, on holy things intent,
Sweet stillness reigned; and there the angel found
The saintly sage immersed in thought profound.
"The One of whom thou thinkest bids thee go
Alone to Spiran's huts across the snow,
To serve Him there." With sorrow and surprise
Malvin looked up, reluctance in his eyes.
The broken thought, the strangeness of the call,
The perilous passage of the mountain wall,
The solitary journey, and the length
Of ways unknown, too great for his frail strength,
Appalled him. With a doubtful brow
He scanned the doubtful task, and muttered,
"How?"

Now as he went, with fading hope, to seek
The third and last to whom God bade him speak,
Scarce twenty steps away whom should he meet
But Fermor, hurrying cheerful down the street,
With ready heart that faced his work like play,
And joyed to find it greater every day!
The angel stopt him with uplifted hand,
And gave without delay his Lord's command:
"He whom thou servest here would have thee go
Alone to Spiran's huts, across the snow,
To serve Him there." Ere Asmiel breathed again
The eager answer leapt to meet him,
"When?"

The angel's face with inward joy grew bright.
I have found the man who loves Him best.
Not thine, nor mine, to question or reply
When He commands us, asking "how?" or "why?"
He knows the cause; His ways are wise and just;
Who serves the King must serve with perfect trust.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

"The man said, The woman thou gavest me to be with me, she gave me of the tree."

"The woman said, The serpent beguiled me."—Gen. 3:12-13.

THE Bible is the great book of human nature. More than any other book it is a book of living documents. There is photographed in the Scriptures every phase of human nature. We may live in a very different age and in a widely divergent civilization, but in the record in this book, that tells how Adam, when he had yielded to temptation and had eaten the forbidden fruit, undertook to shirk the responsibility of his own act by throwing it on his wife we recognize that he acted exactly as men are acting to-day. There are none of us who find him hard to understand. And when we see Eve, conscious of guilt and shamed by her sin, seeking to evade the force of an accusing conscience by laying it on Satan and his beguiling influence, she seems very

much like the women we have seen. When we turn further over into the records and see Pilate, when he has not the moral stamina to stand out against the men who are clamoring for the life of Jesus, bringing a basin of water into the court-room and washing his hands before the multitude, as if by that act he would wash away all of the stains of responsibility for his conduct as governor in connection with the crucifixion of Christ, we recognize him at a glance as one of the politicians with whom we have had to do.

Our theme is one of the greatest that has to do with our human life, our accountability and responsibility for our own conduct.

I

It is well for us to note in the study of this scene that we can not put the responsibility of our sin on God. How natural it seems to be to attempt it. See how Adam suggests this. "The woman, whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat!" You see the suggestion,

"I was all right when I was alone. I kept away from the forbidden fruit and attended to my own business. If you had left me alone, this never would have happened. But you gave me this woman, and this is what comes of it." All this you read between the lines of this suggestion. And, indeed, you may see the same thing suggested in Eve's answer. "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." It is as tho she said, "If there had not been a Satan to tempt, I would not have fallen." But this is all folly. St. James says, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God can not be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man; but each man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin; and the sin, when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death." We all know the strange readiness to feel that the situation in which God has placed us, or the disposition He has given to us, is in some way responsible for the wrong we do. But we can not abuse God's gift and then use that as an excuse for breaking His law. God pours forth His gifts upon us

for our enjoyment and for our blessing. He gives us abundance that we may grow strong and beautiful and splendid, but we can not make these things the excuse for sinning against Him. Instead of blaming God for giving us blessings which we can abuse, the blame is always on us for perverting the good gifts of God. The farmer to whom God has given seed-corn, who afterward makes him a still-house and changes it into intoxicating liquor and becomes a drunkard, can not blame God because he made it out of the corn which God bestowed upon him.

II

Neither can we throw the blame on the devil. There are a great many people who slander the devil. Eve says, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." But Eve did not have to surrender to Satan. She did surrender, because she wanted the fruit. However cunning and wily the devil may be, and however beguiling his manner and his language and the pictures he places before the imagination, he has no power to force us to do evil. He tried it with Job and failed. He took away his property,

robbed him of his family, afflicted him with disease, and yet Job said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Satan tried his most beguiling arts with Jesus in the wilderness and from the pinnacle of the temple in the city, and he met the stern rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan." He failed completely. Christ went away from him and on to His work in the ministry in the power of the Spirit. It is a mean thing to try to throw off on the devil our own personal guilt. Satan may tempt us, but he has no power to betray the fortress of our hearts into his hands. There must be treachery in our own souls or we will never yield to his beguiling fascination. It used to be a favorite plan among the Indians in the early border warfare with the settlers to manage to get a hitherto friendly old squaw, or a half-breed Indian supposed to be trustworthy, smuggled into the fort with the whites, and then in the stillness of the night these treacherous spies would creep stealthily to the door or gate and let in the lurking foe upon the sleeping garrison. It is in like manner that human hearts are captured by the evil one. He is powerless to do us

harm unless there be a traitor within ourselves.

III

Neither can we throw the blame of our sins on a wife or a husband, or neighbors, or friends, or the circumstances which are surrounding us. Because Eve had eaten of the fruit first and then persuaded her husband, was no possible excuse for him. Because Satan beguiled Eve was no real excuse for her breaking the law of her God. How ready we are to try to find somebody else responsible for the sin which we commit. But we can not escape responsibility that way. Adam could have refused; Eve could have refused. And our sins gain their evil standing before God from the fact that they can be avoided. We are not here to be driftwood on the current of the river of circumstance, but we are here to use the currents of life and make them turn the wheels of our purpose and grind the flour that makes our bread. It is idle to say we are in the grip of circumstances. We must grip circumstances by the power of God and

make them our servants. Herod, when he slew John the Baptist, put himself off, I do not doubt, with excuses about the wine he had been drinking and the oath into which he had been deceived, and the people who had heard his promise, who were his guests at the table. No doubt he lulled his conscience to sleep for a while by shuffling out of a sense of responsibility on the ground that his act was forced on him by circumstances that he could not control; but after a little while some one came and told him of the miracles that were being wrought by Christ, and he did not know what to make of them, and in a moment all the excuses with which he had been drugging his conscience were swept away, and he drew back in fear and horror and cried aloud, "It is John the Baptist, whom I beheaded!" Depend upon it, my friends, all your efforts to shirk the responsibility of your own conduct by laying it upon others will end like that. One of the great poems, entitled "The Hound of Heaven," has for its theme the description of the soul chased by an awakened conscience. It was written by a man who was very brilliant, and blest with great

intellectual powers, but who yielded to the beguiling fascinations of evil until his life was marked by dissipation and despair. But in this poem he tells us that wherever he wandered, however great his misfortune, however reckless his sinning, he could not get away from God, and he speaks of conscience and the voice of conscience as if it were a hound, perpetually chasing him:

I fled him down the nights and down the days;
I fled him down the arches of the years;
I fled him down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind, and in the midst of tears
I hid from him, and under running laughter
Up vistaed hopes I fled;
And shot precipitated
Adown Titanic glooms of chasm'd fears,
From those strong feet that followed, followed after,
But with unhurrying chase, and unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat, and a voice beat,
More instant than the feet—
All things betray thee, who betrayest me.

The poet tells us that he sought to hide himself from this hound that followed him wherever he wandered, but it was impossible. Whether he sought to drown his fear

in pleasure, or whether he was engulfed in sorrow, that hound never lost the scent of his trail.

> Still with unhurrying chase
> And unperturbed pace,
> Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
> Came on the following feet,
> And a voice above their beat—
> Naught shelters thee, who will not shelter me.

That is surely a grim figure which pictures conscience like a hound on the track of its prey, but terrible as the figure is, it is truthful, and it is only the assurance of the mercy of God that He will not permit us to be lulled to sleep long at a time concerning our responsibility for our sins.

In order to save ourselves from being thus deceived, we ought never to permit ourselves to blame any one else for our deeds. Nothing is more unwise than to allow children to lay their faults on any one else, even on the devil. Dr. Charles F. Deems tells the story of a child whom he knew—a child of strong character and strong passions who had paroxysms of rage. Her parents would sometimes tell her to open her mouth and let the bad spirit go

under the table. The child was growing into the belief that she was the innocent victim of an unseen being, who was another person, and she was learning to shift all the responsibility upon that person. A friend one day wisely taught her the fallacy of this; showed her that she was the only person responsible; that she herself was the bad spirit, and there was nothing to do but to have that spirit—namely, herself—totally changed. She went away by herself and prayed—prayed as David prayed when the conviction seized him that it was against God and God only that he had sinned. There was no third party in the transaction. From the hour the child had the conviction of her personal responsibility, she was a changed person. So must we all feel. We can never resist temptation as we should so long as we hold anybody else responsible for our sins.

IV

These sins for which we are personally responsible are those for which we must give an account at the great judgment. I

read not long ago a comment on the reference to what is called "The Book of Life" in the 20th chapter of the Book of Revelation. The writer declared that this suggested that each of our lives was an autobiography which we were daily and hourly writing. There is something very striking about that thought, for this Book of Life which each of us is writing in the deeds of every day has its transcript in the other world. Every act which men do here, and which they are responsible for doing, is known yonder. What John says about the book is figurative, of course. God forgets nothing, and so requires no actual records to remind Him. But there is a deep truth underlying such figures, which is apt to be overlooked. That truth is, that every act that we do here is known to the great Judge, and is recorded against us. You have seen those old-fashioned manifold writers. Possibly some of you use them yet in your places of business. The construction of them is this: a sheet of paper, a black carbon paper to be put in below it, and then another sheet on the other side, and the pen or pencil that writes on the

top surface, makes an impression that is carried through the black to the sheet below, and there is a duplicate which the writer keeps. So you and I upon this fleeting life are penning that which goes through the mysterious dark and is reproduced and docketed yonder. That is no fancy; it is a tremendous fact. Every day, every hour, every moment, we are writing, writing, writing our own biography, and God knows every word, every syllable, every letter that we put into it, better even than we know it ourselves.

My dear friends, what have you written there? Is there writing there that you dare not meet in the presence of the great white throne? Then, I pray you, now and here, bring your own sins to judgment by invoking the forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ your Savior.

THE CONFLICT OF THE CENTURIES

"I will put enmity between thee and the woman."—Gen. 3:15.

We have here the beginning of the mighty conflict of the ages. All other wars that have curst the earth and have fattened on bloodshed and human anguish have been but phases of this age-long warfare. All other struggles have been evanescent and transitory; this has never ceased for an hour since the opening gun was fired in the Garden of Eden. The ages have counted themselves off by the century and by the thousand years; nations have been born and come into power and gone forth to conquest, and have in turn disintegrated and been broken in pieces that their fragments might build up still other nations; but this fight goes on, and must continue to go on, until man everywhere has been redeemed from the power of evil and has come to his rightful place as the ransomed son of God.

I

Our theme suggests to us a battlefield. On one side is Satan and all evil spirits; on the other side is God and the angels, and man is the prize over which this conflict of the centuries is being fought. The materialism of the world in which we live presses in upon us so continuously through all the windows of our senses that it is sometimes hard for us to appreciate the reality of these vital spiritual warriors who are fighting in this conflict, and yet the Bible revelation concerning them is the most probable order when we reflect upon it. Canon Liddon points out that it is only reasonable to suppose that the graduated series of living beings, graduated as it is so delicately, which we trace from the lowest creatures up to man, does not stop abruptly with man, that it continues beyond, altho we may be unable to follow the invisible steps of the continuing ascent. And this, which appears reasonable to us, is confirmed by the Scriptures, which reveal to us on one hand the pure and holy angels,

and on the other hand evil spirits who were not created evil, but who lost their high estate through abuse of their freedom, as man lost his in Eden. These spiritual beings, the Bible assures us, both the good and the evil, act upon humanity as clearly, as certainly, and as constantly as man himself acts upon the lower creatures surrounding us in the world. And this is what Paul means when he says, "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness." And I am sure that all thoughtful men and women must agree with Canon Liddon that our experience bears out this declaration of Paul. Who of us has not known what it is to be carried away by a sudden impulse—to be driven, we know not why, hither and thither in conscious humiliation and shame before some strong, overmastering gust of passion? Surely we, too, like Paul, have often seen another law in our members, warring against the law of our minds, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin that is in our members. And

what is this at the bottom but to feel ourselves in the strong arms of another power, who, for the moment, has overmastered us and holds us down? We may be unable to discern his form; we may be unable to define the exact limits of his power; we may despair to decide what it is that we supply to the dread result of our own fund of perverted passion, and what it is that this unseen evil personality adds from the hot breath of an intenser furnace. But the reality of that evil influence is as sure as any physical experience that we know. You might as well say that some fearful epidemic which sweeps over one of our modern cities ravaging it of hundreds of human lives is itself a creation of human fancy, that it had in itself no real existence, that it was the real cause of no real disease in the individuals who succumbed to it. Our imagination may do much; but there are limits to its power, and the higher facts are just as much beyond it as are the facts of physical nature. The mightiest battle that is going on in this world is that contest between good and evil which goes on in the human soul, where good spirits and evil

spirits do fierce battle, with our manhood and our womanhood as the noble prize.

II

This great theme suggested by our text makes it evident to us that if man were simply a neutral factor, the battle would soon be over. God and Christ and the spirits of good would sweep the battle-field of the universe and man would be saved, heaven's prize forever. But man is not a neutral factor, he is not a mere machine. He is a creature who thinks, who has the power of choice and decision, and he throws his influence constantly on the one side or the other. We ought to learn, therefore, from our theme the supreme importance of seeking to maintain our purity and in every way possible strengthen our honor against the invading hosts of evil.

A gentleman describing a visit to a light-house on a high point of a wild and rocky coast, says that he was interested to know about the oil that made the lamps burn so brightly. It was paraffin oil, the lighthouse

keeper told him, and he showed him a cupful. He struck a match, and was bringing it near the oil, when the visitor grabbed the keeper's hand. "Take care," he said. "If that oil explodes there is enough to kill us all." "There would be," said the lighthouse keeper, "if this was like most paraffin oil; but you won't find any danger about this." Then he took the lighted match and put it into the oil! And the oil put out the match as if it had been water, and did not take fire itself. And the visitor says he learned that day that there was pure paraffin; and that when paraffin is pure, quite pure, it gives the brightest light when used in the proper way for the lamp, but it will not explode and do harm as common paraffin when a light comes near it.

So, my friends, the heart that is impure catches fire at every temptation, but the clean heart and the right spirit, which God is ready to give to all who really seek after them, enables us to overcome temptation and make our lives "as the dawning light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

The armor and the weapons by which

alone we may overcome the evil hosts that war against the soul are not physical or temporal, but are spiritual. Neither wealth nor culture are able to save the fortress of man's soul from the invasion of wickedness. Society in every age has seemed as rotten at the top as at the bottom. And surely, if we may judge by the manifestations which come to us in the courts, in the life of our own time, there is no power in that thing called social refinement, or good breeding, or social status, or position, that can defend the soul of man from the invasion of wicked spirits.

Neither is there any power in learning to help man to win the battle against evil. Education quickens the intellect, it sharpens the intellectual abilities of men, but it does not give power to curb the passions. Even a professor of Harvard University was hanged for murder of the most brutal character.

Neither is there any power in art, or music, in the more esthetic and delicate graces of life, to master wicked passions and unholy appetites. It was in the palmiest days of her art and literature that Greece

became most corrupt and wicked. And so to-day there is no evidence in any land that the mere love of beautiful things, of the possession of a cultivated critical taste for beauty in art or music or literature, is any guarantee of moral purity or safety. No, indeed! our warfare is not temporal, but spiritual. The weapons with which we fight to maintain righteousness must be the weapons of the spirit.

I do not doubt that many of you noted, as I did, the description given in the newspaper dispatches of the visit of Theodore Roosevelt to the tomb of Napoleon, and you perhaps noted how he took up the sword which the great warrior carried in the battle of Austerlitz, and waved it about his head and examined its edge, and held it aloft, seeming in the meantime to be profoundly imprest. And we may well imagine and believe that the hero of San Juan Hill was stirred in every drop of his soldierly blood as he stood on that historic spot with that famous sword gript in his right hand. But if we could gather together all the famous swords kept in all the capitals of the world, in memory of princes and warriors

and heroes who have carried them on historic battlefields, they would be insignificant in comparison to that "sword of the Spirit," of which Paul speaks in his letter to the Ephesians—a sword by which millions of humble men and women, and even boys and girls, have put to flight the alien armies of hell and maintained their integrity against odds as the faithful children of God.

III

Our theme should make every human being interesting to us, for it teaches us that this conflict of the centuries is going on in every man and woman we meet. I think we are too easily discouraged in regard to the possibility of winning the battle for God among sinning men and women. We should remember that naturally the human heart belongs to God and not to the devil, and that the fact that some people are notoriously wicked and that other people's sins are seemingly more respectable, may not mean that the one is farther away from God or in greater danger of eternal de-

feat than the other. It should give us courage that in any fight we make to win a sinner from his sins, we are fighting on the side of the angels, on the side of Christ and God. That thought should make us brave and hopeful in every such struggle. One of the bravest soldiers of Christ I have ever personally known was Ira D. Sankey, Mr. Moody's singing partner in his great evangelistic campaigns. Sankey feared nothing when in pursuit of a soul which he felt called upon to capture for his Master. John L. Sullivan, the notorious pugilist, recently told the story of how he was stopping in a hotel in Buffalo, N. Y., some fifteen years ago, when a bell-boy reported that a man down-stairs wanted to come up to his room and see him, and that if Sullivan would not give his permission he was coming up anyhow. Curiosity to see the author of this daring message induced the pugilist to return a rather grudging invitation, and in a moment or two Mr. Sankey appeared in the doorway of the fighter's room.

"What do you want with me?" Sullivan growled at him.

Sankey came back at him straight as a shot: "I want you to change your way of living and set a different example for the youth of the country. You have no right to squander your strength on wild living. It was given you for a different purpose."

Sullivan admits that it made him mad clear through. He tried to beg off from his visitor's condemnation by saying that Mr. Sankey could not possibly know what it was to want liquor, nor how badly some poor fellows need a drink when they are in hard luck.

To this Sankey replied: "Now, Mr. Sullivan, don't make the mistake of thinking that I don't know anything about the world and the things to which you refer. I have been pretty close to them in more countries than one, and I am here to ask you to do something for the growing boys by setting them a good example. Those are the people we want to start in the right channels. By showing them the proper way to live, you can do as much for saving them as I can."

Such straight, manly, friendly appeal soon disarmed the big, rough fighter's resentment, and he surrendered utterly to his

unbidden guest. Sullivan's final comment on the occurrence is: "We sat there and talked for an hour, and he soon got it through my head that I was wrong and he was right. And tho I did not heed his advice at the time, he certainly made a great try, and went a long distance out of his way to force something on me that I needed. When I read of Sankey's death in the papers I could not help but think of his meeting with me and how hard he tried to make me do right. I have often wondered what he would say of me since I have cut out the red stuff and tried to live as he told me."

No such effort, bravely made, ever fails of good, tho at the time it may seem to be lost, and every struggle that we make to throw our force, such as it is, on the side of truth and righteousness and against wrong and evil helps others about whom we do not know. If we evermore keep our sword drawn on the right side, we may be sure that the glitter of that sword will put courage in other souls who are ready to faint. Some poet sings:

The far winds brought me tidings of him—one
  Who fought alone, a champion unafraid,
Hurt in the desperate warring, faint, fordone;
  I loved him, and I prayed.

The far winds told the turning of the strife;
  Into his deeds there crept a strange new fire.
Unconquerable, the glory of his life
  Fulfilled my soul's desire.

God knows what mighty bond invisible
  Gave my dream power, wrought answer to my prayer;
God knows in what far world our souls shall tell
  Of triumph that we share.

I war alone; I shall not see his face.
  But I shall strive more gladly in the sun,
More bravely in the shadow, for this grace:
  "He fought his fight, and won."

THE PROMISED SAVIOR

"God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this . . . I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."—Gen. 3:14-15.

THERE is an old legend about a temple in Paradise. The early traditions tell us that there was a temple in Eden for Adam and Eve to worship in. Watkinson wittily says that the place certainly would not have been crowded. But the old legend tells us that this temple was built of pearls, and was the most magnificent shrine that ever stood on the globe. The foundations were diamonds, and the dome was a mighty, flashing sapphire. It was the most majestic temple the world has ever seen. But the story says that on the day when Adam and Eve yielded to the beguiling temptation of Satan and sinned against God, this glorious temple fell into ruin and was scattered all over the planet. So the diamonds and pearls, the topaz and beryl, and all the other precious

stones round to-day are the remnants of that primitive shrine. There is a deep and significant lesson in this old legend. Through human sin and folly the temple of truth has been shattered, and you may search through the legends and traditions and creeds and philosophies of all the tribes of men and you will find the scattered remnants mixed with rubbish, yet shining in the dust. But in Jesus Christ, the Savior promised for the first time in this early morning of the world's childhood, we get back the temple of truth in more than fabled splendor.

I

We have in our text the beginnings of the River of Life. Were you ever in at the beginning of a river? Did you ever stand up in that wet, spongy place on the mountain plateau where the wild flags bloom and the ferns are thick? And did you follow a little farther down where a few drops of water oozed out from under a stone and dropt down over another? And did you go a little farther on and notice how it began to trickle

and then to gurgle and get a song in its heart, and the birds and the squirrels and the cotton-tails and the wild fawns came to drink at its side and thank God? Ah! if you have been there you have noticed how soon it gets courage, that little brook, and burrows out for itself deep holes under the dark rocks where the trout hide, and then rushes forth over the great boulders and splashes white in the sun, making a sight so beautiful that the little dark water-ouzels dive into it for very delight. And then as you follow it other brooks like it join hands on the one side and then on the other. Soon it is strong enough to turn the wheels of a mill where men come for bread. A little farther on it can give up water for a great irrigation ditch to spread out over a hundred miles of thirsty plains and make the desert smile like the Garden of God. But on it pours its ever-deepening and ever-widening stream. Other rivers with a like history, coming from mountains far away, grown strong by a hundred brooks poured into their bosom, add their floods to the now mighty river. Towns and cities spring up along its shores. Ships come in from the sea

borne upon its swelling currents, and fifty miles before it reaches the ocean the tides of the mighty deep come with long arms to welcome it to the home of the waters.

Our text reminds me of that evolution of the river. Here upon the high tableland, on the roof of the world's childhood, in the midst of earth's sin and sorrow, in the spoiled paradise, is the first spring of promised mercy and salvation, in the promise that the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of Satan. Follow that stream down through the hills of early history and you will hear again the promise made to Abraham that in his seed shall all the families of the earth be blest. Follow on through the story of Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Moses, and Caleb, and Joshua, and you will see other streams adding their waters to this growing stream of promise. After a while you come to David, and the Psalms add their force to the swelling tide. On through the prophets, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and Daniel, and Hosea, and many others help to swell the stream of hope and salvation that poured over Golgotha's rugged crag a cataract of the River

of Life, by the side of which the Savior Himself may cry, "The Spirit and the Bride say Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come; and he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely."

Brahmo Somaj Fellow, a native of Bengal, India, who has been for some years a student in this country, recently declared in a public address that the appearance of Jesus was like the first glow of morning on the snowy crown of the Himalayas. If you ever happen to be there, says this traveler from India, go in the early hours of the morning, when the mountains and valleys are still enshrouded in darkness and the eastern sky does not yet show the faintest tint of dawn, and stand on the brow of a hill looking northward and watch for the first morning light. You do not see the light first on the eastern horizon, but far above on the sky in front of you. Above the slumbering mountains and valleys there glows out almost suddenly a beautiful point of light like a piecè of burning coal: Mt. Everest has caught the light of the sun, even before it has appeared on the horizon. Gradually this light

glides down the snowy peak, lighting up each little pinnacle and bathing the snowy surface in pink and white, and anon the sun rises on the eastern horizon and morning breaks. Such, says the Oriental student, was the appearance of Jesus and such the progress of His religion. The world was enveloped in darkness when Jesus was born. Idolatry and superstition, with corruption, extravagant luxury, unbridled dissipation and cruelty following in their trails, stalked over the length and breadth of the world. Greece, Rome, Egypt, each had its pantheon of gods. The light of wisdom and truth which Socrates had kindled and Plato and Aristotle had fanned into flame was well-nigh extinguished. Epicureanism and skepticism ruled on the thrones of philosophy and ethics. Judaism, which had always stood amid this sea of universal idolatry with the flaming torch of monotheism in her hand, was groaning under the burden of empty rituals and ceremonies, and instead of the thundering voice of the ancient Hebrew prophets were heard only the senseless mutterings of the priests or the hollow, boastful wranglings of the Pharisees. India, which

had once vibrated under the strains of the Vedic hymns, had devoutly listened to the deep words of wisdom of the Upanishads, had seen the noble Sakya-Muni walking from door to door, preaching his gospel of renunciation and mercy, now lay in bondage to a system of grim idolatry and priestcraft from which God only knows when she will be free. In the midst of such an universal spiritual gloom, far above on the firmament of Palestine, appeared the figure of Jesus clad in raiment of light.

And the Christ who was born in Bethlehem and who lived and preached in Palestine and died upon the cross and rose from the dead on Easter morning is the fulfilment of the promise made in our text in the world's childhood.

It is recorded of Mendelssohn that at a concert at which he was to play, he was late in arriving, and meanwhile a local organist filled up the interval of waiting with a selection of Scottish airs. Mendelssohn, when he came, slipt unobserved into his place at the organ, and, putting his hands upon the keyboard, carried on without any break the Scottish strain with his own

brilliant improvising. At once a thrill went through the audience. They felt the change, and, looking up, saw the explanation of it. The master himself was there. It was something like that when Jesus came into the world. He, too, came without observation, and He, too, took up the strain of the prophets of old, and carried it on, but in His own wonderful way. The common people felt the thrill of the Master's touch, and from that day until this that thrill has been felt more and more, until its electric influence is beginning to awaken all the nations of men.

II

It has been well said that every great and important question always becomes a personal question with each individual. It is impossible for us to talk about Jesus Christ as the promised Savior for all mankind without arousing in our hearts the question, "Has He become my Savior?" A moment ago I was giving you the utterance of a scholar from India concerning Jesus. Let

me give you another Indian story. A general in the British Army tells it. This general was in service in India during the awful times of the mutiny there. He had in his regiment a little bugler twelve or thirteen years of age, a very frail little fellow. His mother had been a Scripture-reader; his father a brave man. The father died in action, and the mother drooped and died shortly after, and their boy was left alone in the regiment. This little fellow was a very saint. He had a rough time of it, because he was made the butt of the coarse jests of the crowd of soldiers. But he went along his way quietly, living his Master's life. One day they had gone away some miles from the seat of action for rifle practise. It was a swampy bit of country, unhealthy, and the colonel did not want to take the boy along, he was so delicate. But the surgeon said: "Let the boy go. The men drive him a hard life, but his presence makes it so much easier to handle them. He has enormous influence. Let him go." So the boy went.

It was a very ticklish time in the regiment. They had a lot of rough men. There

was a good deal of insubordination which could not be traced down to the perpetrators. One night the practise targets were thrown down, and so injured that the practise had to be set aside for several days. That was very serious, and so the general gave orders to find out who the perpetrators were. He thought he must make an example of them. They traced the wrong-doing to a certain tent in which this boy was, a tent that contained some of the worst men of the regiment, and they had a court-martial. It was very clear that somebody in that tent was guilty of this wrong-doing. And the commander said, "Now, we know this squad of men contains the guilty man, and if the guilty one will step out like a man the rest will go free." But nobody came. He said: "If one of you men will step out and take your punishment, ten strokes of the cat, the whole squad will go untouched." And he waited. Nobody came. Of course, they would all have to be whipt with the cat if the one man did not step out. And as he waited, out from the little bunch of men came this bugler-boy, about fourteen by this time; Willie Holt, he

was called. He said: "Colonel, you have given your word that if any man of this squad will step out and take the ten strokes of the cat, the rest will go free. I will take you at your word. I will take the ten strokes of the cat." A look of disgust came into the officer's face, and he said: "You men know that boy is not guilty. Are you not man enough to come out, the guilty one, and take your punishment, and not let that lad take it?"

But there was no reply and the boy quietly said: "Colonel, your word is given." And, sick at heart, the order was given for the boy to be tied up for the lashing. And he was bared to his waist, and tied up, and the strokes came down. One, the second, the third; no cry came, then, as the fourth stroke came down on that little back, just a moan burst from the lad's lips that his brave heart could not hold in. And then Jim Skyes, the worst man in the regiment, the black sheep, came bounding out. "Stop, colonel, I should be there. That boy is not guilty. I am. Tie me up; let me take the strokes."

And the boy, with white, tense face, smiled,

and said, "No, Jim, the colonel's word has been given. I have taken the punishment. You are free." Then he fainted. They carried him off to the hospital and the next day the colonel went down to see how the boy was getting along. Stepping into the room where his cot was, unnoticed, this was what he saw: the boy lying there, pillowed up, very frail, very weak; and on the floor, on his knees by the boy's side, was Jim Sykes, the blackguard of the regiment. He was saying: "Oh, Willie, why did you do it? What made you do it?" And the boy smilingly said, "Ah, Jim, I wanted you to know this. I did it that you might know that this is what Christ did for you; only He did so much more. I suffered for one sin, but He suffered for all our sins. He bore our stripes for all our sins, and He loves you, Jim."

"Oh," Jim said, "not the likes of me. I am a bad one."

"Ah," the boy was saying, "He loves you, Jim. Trust Him. He did what I did but so much more." And then the boy fainted. In a few days he passed away. But Jim Skyes was utterly changed. And

as the general told the story, it was plain that he, too, had been changed.

Oh, my friends, what Jesus Christ did for them, He did for you. Shall He not be your Savior too? His love for you is passing all description. The love of Christ, as Christina Rossetti says, is stronger than death:

I have not sought Thee, I have not found Thee,
I have not thirsted for Thee,
And now cold billows of death surround me,
Buffeting billows of death astound me—
Wilt Thou look upon, wilt Thou see
Thy perishing me?

Yea, I have sought thee, yea, I have found thee,
Yea, I have thirsted for thee;
Yea, long ago with love's bands I bound thee.
Now, the everlasting arms surround thee,—
Through death's darkness I look and see,
And clasp thee to me.

It is to this Savior, able to save unto the uttermost every one that will come unto God by Him, that I call you. Trust Him and He will never fail you. Let us make our vows unto Him now and say with Richard Gilder:

If Jesus Christ is a man,
And only a man, I say,
That of all mankind I cleave to Him,
And to Him will I cleave alway.
If Jesus Christ is a God,
And the only God, I swear,
I will follow Him through heaven and hell,
The earth, the sea, the air.

THE END.

ADVERTISEMENTS

WORKS BY
DR. BANKS

IN TWENTY-ONE VOLUMES

PUBLISHED BY
FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY

The Pastor as a Soul Winner

DR. BANKS'S EXPERIENCE

EVERY SUNDAY morning and every Sunday evening I am at the main entrance of the Church when the doors are thrown open, half an hour before the service begins. I shake hands with the people as they come in. The first fifteen or twenty minutes, even in a very large congregation, the people gather rather slowly, and in a big city church with an average congregation of from fourteen hundred to sixteen hundred people, there will be a large percentage of strangers during these early moments. I find out the names of these people, find out whether they are Christians, and if they have any church affiliation. If they are not Christians, I get by tactful questioning as much insight as possible into their mental attitude toward Christianity. I go up to the sermon with my hands full of memoranda of names and addresses. Oftentimes I have in this way made discoveries that have been very stimulating to me in the sermon which followed, and the fact that I have had the friendly talk at the door makes the sermon far more attractive to many people.

AT THE CLOSE of the sermon I say to the people that I shall remain for a while at the altar of the church, and shall be very glad to shake hands with any who would like to meet me, and grateful if strangers who come occasionally will wait long enough for me to meet them. This brings to me many people from those who come in late, after the

service opened. It also brings, nearly every Sunday, some people to whom the sermon has been a message from God, and who give me a glimpse into their hearts, and put me on the trail of a possible convert. Again I have my pencil and memorandum book, and gather still more addresses. The same thing goes on in the evening, and all through the year, every Sunday, rain or shine, when I am at home with my church.

NOW ON MONDAY MORNING I have this pile of addresses. With some persons I have made definite engagements for a certain time of the day, and for certain days in the week. For some people who are busy during the day, I have made definite engagements for certain evenings, and sometimes Monday morning finds me with every evening in the week booked full of this class of engagements, with the exception of the evenings upon which I have regular church services. This gives me a chance to follow up the message of the sermon before it has been forgotten and ere its influence has been lost.

THE RESULT IS VERY REMARKABLE. Scarcely a week has passed during the last two years that there have not been from one to a dozen who have been brought to a definite decision to seek Christ and to unite with his church through these personal interviews in the week following the sermon. I bring all these people into a class, and meet them one evening in the week to study the simple beginnings of Christian life and character, etc., etc.—*From the Preface to his book "Sermons Which Have Won Souls."*

"Sad will be the day *for any man when he becomes contented with the thoughts he is thinking and the deeds he is doing—where there is not beating at the doors of his soul some great desire to do something larger which he knows that he was meant and made to do.*"

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